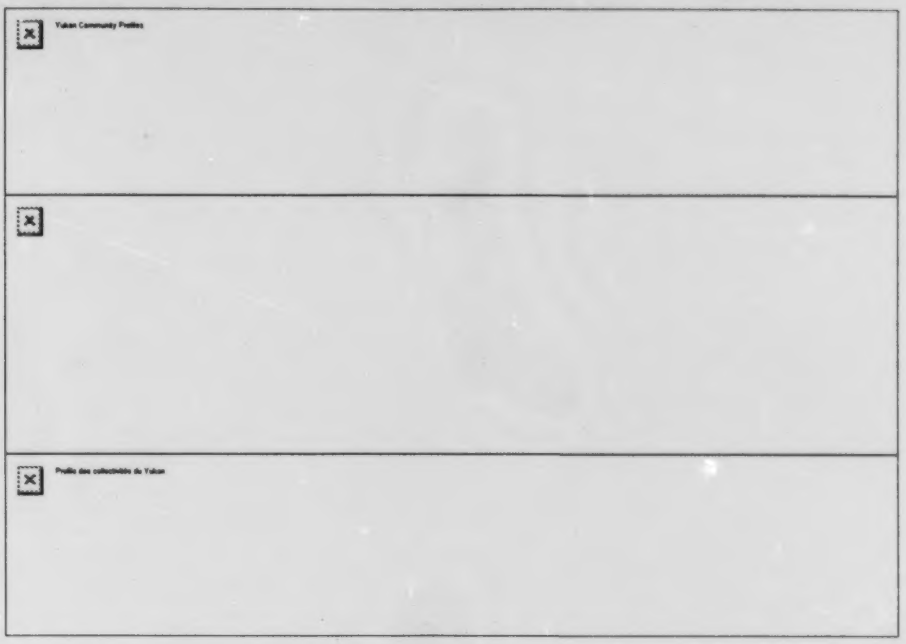
Yukon Community Profiles
Profils des collectivités du Yukon

Acknowledgements

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With appropriate acknowledgement, material in this publication may be reproduced without permission. Comments about the contents of this publication and suggestions for improving it are welcome. Please address them to:

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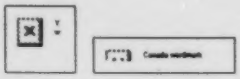


Information Sources and Notes

People living in the community, their numbers and population trends, are from the *Yukon Statistical Review - 1998 Annual Report* published by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics. The numbers are derived from health administrative records and provide the most current population estimates for communities. The age distributions of the population and gender information were also derived from this source. Census data from the 1996 Census of Canada, mainly from Statistics Canada's *Profile of Census Divisions and Subdivisions in the Yukon Territory*, have been used for other population information such as the First Nations proportion. Census data were also used to describe the mobility of community residents.

First Nations. Registered membership information is from the statistical database of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as reported on their website, and from local estimates. Other information in the First Nations sections was drawn from a variety of sources.

The Economy. The 1996 Census of Canada provides the core information on employment shares by industry. Other information was drawn from Yukon and federal government publications such as those on mining, tourism and parks. Local sources provided additional information.

Information on **Work** is largely drawn from the 1996 Census. This section covers participation or involvement in the labour market (money economy), which includes both the number of people employed and the number of people unemployed but looking for work. Other aspects covered include work patterns such as full-time, full year, incidence of self-employment, earned incomes and the main occupations found in each community. For some communities Census data for a few subdivisions (geographic areas) were combined to best reflect the overall community situation. Employment Insurance claimant numbers come from Human Resources Development Canada's administrative data as reported in the *Yukon Statistical Review - 1998 Annual Report*. Further information on work characteristics came from other community, Yukon or other government sources. Local sources were consulted extensively. A detailed description of occupations and the nature of work and labour markets in the Yukon can be found in *Yukon WorkFutures*.

Education levels of the adult population and attendance of the 15 to 24 age group

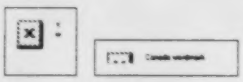
at school or college are from the 1996 Census.

Community and Business Services. The major information sources include local, municipal and other descriptions of each community, tourism reports, the Community Health information web site, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles* of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Yukon land and environment reviews, Yukon College, schools and other Internet sites. Community contributors (see Acknowledgements) also provided information. Internet sites have been listed at the end of each profile for further reference.

Housing numbers, values and costs were derived from the 1996 Census with additional information drawn from the *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles* and Yukon Bureau of Statistics material. The **cost of living** information was taken from Yukon government Community Spatial Price Indices, as reported in the *Yukon Statistical Review - 1998 Annual Report.*

Living in the Community was written by community contributors (see Acknowledgements).

Climate records are from Environment Canada records as reported in the *Yukon Statistical Review - 1998 Annual Report* or were obtained directly from Environment Canada.



Introduction - The Yukon

Living and Doing Business in the Yukon | The Economy | More Information

The Yukon is no longer the frontier society of gold rush legend, but neither is it exactly like southern Canada. If you want to live, work, or simply do business in the Yukon, it's useful to know something about the nature of the place and the people who live there.

In terms of population, the Yukon is small. In 1998 the population was about 32,000, down 1,500 from the year before. This drop was an exception in the nineties. Generally the population has grown slowly but steadily over the past decade.

The Yukon population has fluctuated historically, usually in response to changes in the mining industry. Yet today the population is relatively stable. There is a substantial core of people who were born in the Yukon or who are long-term residents. Another stabilizing factor is the large local First Nations population - 20 percent, according to the 1996 Census, compared to 3 percent for Canada as a whole. The Yukon population is also a little younger than the Canadian average with comparatively few people over 65 years of age.

Living and Doing Business in the Yukon

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The Yukon is in the far north, a long way from most centres in Canada. This affects life, work, and business in the Yukon. In some ways, however, distance and location have surprisingly little impact.

Travel is affected most by the Yukon's location. Air service connects Whitehorse with Vancouver year-round, but the daily scheduled flights can be busy. Booking ahead is important and airfares can be expensive. Discount fares are often not as sharply reduced, or as readily available, as fares between many southern cities. Airlines offering lower rates serve the Territory on a limited schedule in the summer.

For the size of the population, the Yukon has good roads, including a major section of the Alaska Highway. Major roads are paved, and all communities except Old Crow have year-round road access. However, when driving in winter, it's wise to carry emergency equipment. Public ground transportation within the Yukon is

limited to bus service, mainly within Whitehorse. Small airlines offer year-round scheduled flights to a few communities and charter flights to others, but extreme winter weather can ground planes with little warning. Cars and trucks can be hired from rental firms in Whitehorse and in a few of the larger communities.

The climate requires a certain amount of planning for all activities. Yukon winters are a couple of months longer than those of southern Canada, and temperatures can drop to minus 50. However, they can also soar above freezing, even in the middle of winter. Summers are short and warm with long sunlit days, but even in July and August night-time temperatures can drop to freezing. The best approach is to expect variability in every season, and in winter expect cold.

Other aspects of location and distance have some, but less, impact. Mail is delivered regularly to all Yukon communities, but not necessarily on a daily basis. A few national couriers serve Whitehorse, and local couriers serve a couple of communities. There is regular freight traffic within and from outside the Yukon. However it is a good idea to allow time for delivery of parts and supplies.

All communities have standard telephone service, but some rural areas have radiophones only or no phones at all. Cell phone coverage is restricted to Whitehorse and its immediate surroundings, as of late 1999. Most major Canadian service suppliers and some American companies have "roaming" agreements with the Yukon supplier, NorthwesTel, but it is important to check with your service supplier to find out if your cell phone will work in the Yukon.

The tourist season is very intense in the Yukon. From late May until late September, the Yukon is flooded with tourists. Hotels and restaurants are all open, and they are busy. People in tourism-related businesses are frantically busy during this season. Others may take their vacations so as to enjoy the brief summer. Business travelers need to plan with the tourist season in mind. The best approach is to book travel, accommodation, and people well ahead. In the off-season, people are easier to contact and prices often drop. However, some hotels and restaurants, particularly in the small communities, simply shut down until spring. Although all communities have some form of year-round accommodation and services, it's still a good idea to book ahead to have the best choice. Whitehorse and the larger communities all have many hotels, motels and restaurants open year-round.

Certain holidays and events in the Yukon may also require some planning for business visitors. In the

summer, while the rest of Canada takes its long weekend at the beginning of August, Yukoners wait to celebrate the anniversary of the discovery of Klondike gold on Discovery Day weekend, the weekend closest to August 17. In February and March, most communities hold a winter festival. Whitehorse's Sourdough Rendezvous, in the third week of February, fills local hotels and takes much of the city's attention for at least part of the week. Another winter event that fills airplanes and hotels is the Yukon Quest sled dog race, run between Whitehorse and Fairbanks, Alaska, in late February and early March.

The proximity to wilderness and the sense of frontier are reflected in various ways in the Yukon. It is not surprising to see wildlife, such as elk, moose, or even bear. Most Yukoners are interested in outdoors activities and may participate in hiking, skiing, canoeing and hunting. Sports facilities both for children and adults are very well supported. Dress is sometimes casual, although office workers may also dress in standard business wear. Boots are of course standard wear in winter, and practicalities mean that many passenger vehicles are SUVs or pickups.

Yukoners, on the whole, have considerable contact with and often first-hand knowledge of the rest of the world. Many residents travel extensively outside the Yukon, to visit family or conduct business. Yukon restaurants, delis, and bakeries attest to residents' knowledgeable tastes.

Cultural life is rich. Northern interests and isolation inspire residents to support many active arts organizations, drama groups, and museums. The Yukon Arts Centre hosts performances by local artists, musicians, and theatre groups, as well as performers brought in from around the country. First Nations cultural events, arts, and crafts add to this richness. Special events can happen any time of the year. The Yukon's annual calendar includes folk music festivals, rodeos, storytelling festivals, trade shows, and races involving every imaginable form of locomotion.

The Yukon College, with a presence in most communities, provides education ranging from university credits to vocational training. It also supports research through the Northern Research Institute. The main campus in Whitehorse has a residence for students from other communities and international students.

Modern technology and communications also work to reduce the impact of

location. Most Yukoners have ready access to television, radio, and film or videotapes, and all but the tiniest communities have local dial-up access to the Internet.

The Economy

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Economic development in the Yukon has been closely linked to mining over the past century. As a result, the economy has boomed or declined, according to the mining industry's cycles. Other factors are now reducing the Yukon's dependence on mining. Government, First Nations land claims agreements, and tourism all have an impact on the economy. Oil and gas development, forestry, and agriculture are currently experiencing more activity than mining, but they remain smaller areas for employment.

Government activity and employment are major supports to the Yukon economy. Territorial, federal, municipal, and First Nations governments create jobs, as do health care, education, and social services, all of which are run by these governments. In 1998, governments employed close to 5,000 people or about a third of all those employed in the Yukon.

Land claims agreements and First Nations self-government are already having a major effect on government and work. There are a large number of people across the Yukon involved in negotiating and implementing agreements. These agreements hold even greater economic promise for the future, especially for First Nations members.

First Nations economic development should boost employment, particularly in areas like resource management and tourism. Both economic development and the provision of social and other services by First Nations governments will create jobs in smaller communities. Knowledgeable and highly skilled workers will be much in demand, especially in fields like technical resource occupations, financial and other management, social and health services, and other service occupations.

Tourism increased considerably during the 1990s. It now provides a significant number of jobs in fields like accommodation and food services, recreation,

transportation, and retail trade. Much of the tourism is seasonal, based on traffic along the Alaska Highway, but there has been growth in activities that broaden the client base and extend the tourist season.

The low Canadian dollar has helped attract European, American, and other tourists. Growing interest in wilderness tourism has also brought dollars and jobs into the Territory. Yukon tourism now offers summer and winter attractions, a wide variety of wilderness activities, and an increasing level of quality and professionalism. Further growth in the industry is likely to come from First Nations tourism development and even stronger interest in the Yukon's wilderness and scenic beauty.

In 1998 the Yukon mining sector declined massively, like most mining around the world. The Yukon economy suffered from lost mining jobs, reduced exploration spending, and the departure of former mine workers. At this time it is unclear when, or to what extent, the industry will recover.

Mining still has the potential to provide economic growth for the Territory in the longer term. When worldwide economic growth recovers, the demand for resources will increase. Then the Yukon's mineral resources should again attract attention. But the new mines won't be quite like the old ones. The industry has been forced to reduce costs and increase productivity. New mines, in the Yukon and elsewhere, will employ fewer and more highly-skilled people than in the past.

There are many positive indicators for the Yukon's economic future. The Territory has a stable population base and skilled, well-educated workers. The settling of land claims is opening new economic opportunities. First Nations self-government is creating local jobs. Tourism and new resource-based industries are providing diversity. The recovery of the world mining industry, and the Yukon's mining sector along with it, can only strengthen the Territory's economic picture.

More Information

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The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics

Canada community information, and has a map system:
http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

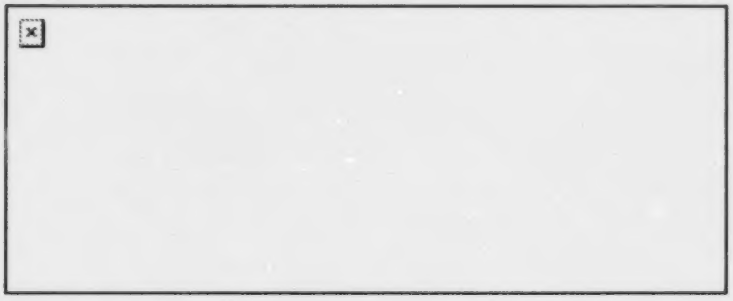
Industry, working conditions, and occupation trend information can be found in *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://workfutures.yk.ca

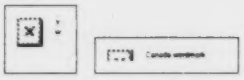
For detailed information on minerals and mining developments see http://www.yukonmining.com

Tourism business information can be seen at http://www.tirc.gov.yk.ca

For more information on starting and operating a business in the Yukon, see the Canada-Yukon Business Service Centre at http://www.cbsc.org/yukon

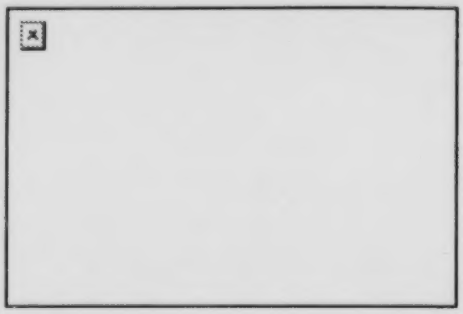
See the Yukon Chamber of Commerce at http://chamber.yukon.net





The Community of Beaver Creek

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information



Beaver Creek, just a few kilometres from the Alaska border on the Alaska Highway, is the most westerly settlement in Canada. This small community is primarily a border post and a service centre for the Alaska Highway. It is also the home of the White River First Nation. Although it's on the Alaska Highway, Beaver Creek is relatively isolated from other Yukon communities, lying almost 300 kilometres northwest of Haines Junction and 457 kilometres from the territorial capital, Whitehorse.

The area around Beaver Creek was home to the Upper Tanana people who camped there on their seasonal migrations. In the early 1900s, Beaver Creek itself was established as a camp for the team surveying the Canada-Alaska border. Later, mining interest developed in the area. In the 1940s, the Alaska Highway was constructed. In the mid-1950s, a Canada Customs post was built and the community of Beaver Creek began to develop.

People

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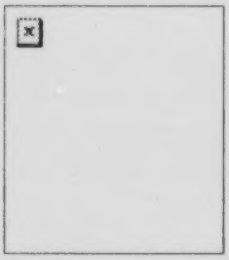

Beaver Creek's population averaged 109 in 1998, down considerably from the 140 reported in 1996. In fact, this is the lowest the population has been since 1991.

The 1996 Census indicated that White River First Nation members made up a little under half of the population. In addition, a number of non-First Nations people live and work in Beaver Creek, providing border crossing and territorial government services as well as commercial services for travelers.

Because of this population mix, determining its mobility is quite complex. The 1996 Census reported that a little over half of the people living in Beaver Creek in 1996 had been living there in 1991. A fairly large proportion (almost 30 percent) of

people living in Beaver Creek in 1996 had moved there from outside the Yukon. Others had moved from elsewhere in the Yukon. This is not an unexpected pattern of mobility, since the people who work in many non-First Nations government services are posted to the Beaver Creek area for limited periods of time.

Half the population is female, a little higher than for the Yukon as a whole, where 49 percent are female.

The age distribution of Beaver Creek reflects the lack of work for local people and the tendency to move out of the area, for periods of time at least, to look for market work elsewhere. The proportion of people in the younger prime working age range (25 to 44 years) was 32 percent. In the Yukon as a whole, 36 percent of the population falls into this age group. Twenty-two percent of the population is aged 14 or under, the same as the Yukon-wide proportion. The proportion of youth aged 15 to 24 is 12 percent, slightly below the Yukon average.

Older people, those 65 and over, make up 12 percent of the Beaver Creek population, significantly higher than the Yukon average of 5 percent. This is another indication that many younger, working-age people leave the community to look for work elsewhere.

First Nations

Beaver Creek is the home of the White River First Nation, which is culturally affiliated with both the Upper Tanana people of Alaska and the Northern Tutchone people to the south and east. The White River First Nation membership is estimated at about 220, many of whom live in other communities.

The Upper Tanana language is an Athapaskan dialect and one of many Athapaskan language groupings. People from the Upper Tanana and Northern Tutchone make up the membership of the White River First Nation. The Upper Tanana traditional area extends deep into the Alaskan interior and into the Yukon's mid-western section. Long ago, there were no borders to divide the people of White River and their relatives in Northway and other Alaskan villages. The small town of Beaver Creek is not the original village site of the Upper Tanana people; they were relocated from Snag and Scottie Creek after the construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942.

In traditional times, the Upper Tanana people pursued a nomadic way of life, following big game, trapping, and fishing, moving with the seasons and setting up camps wherever there was an abundance of natural resources and food. They developed a strict social order within their clan systems and social organization. They celebrated all occasions of life with the institution of the potlatch, a tradition that is carried on today.

The Department of Indian Affairs grouped the Upper Tanana people of Beaver Creek with the Southern Tutchone people of the Kluane area to form the Kluane Band, although they saw themselves as two distinct groups. In 1991, at a Council of Yukon First Nations General Assembly, the White River First Nation officially separated from the Kluane First Nation to form their own First Nation.

The White River First Nation has not yet signed their First Nation Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreement. They are currently in the final stages of the negotiation process with the federal and Yukon governments. The White River First Nation Council administers a variety of housing, municipal, and social programs for its members. Members of the White River First Nation are very active in their cultural revival, promoting traditional dancing, singing, and language programs.

The Economy

Top

The economy of Beaver Creek is not extensive. Government services, which include the Canada Customs post, territorial government, and First Nation administration, provide most longer-term work in the community.

Tourism is the other major money economy in the area. Most tourist facilities are open only from May to September, the prime Yukon tourist season.

First Nations people in Beaver Creek also rely on subsistence and traditional activities. Many people get a significant portion of their food supply from hunting and fishing, and some earn cash through trapping. Traditional crafts are created, and some are sold at a craft store in Beaver Creek.

Work

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At the time of the 1996 Census, about 85 percent of Beaver Creek adults (those 15 years of age and over) reported that they were involved in the formal labour market. This is higher than the Yukon's overall proportion of 81 percent. However, it is important to remember that this proportion includes a significant number of government employees posted to the community.

Unemployment in Beaver Creek, in 1996, was 18 percent, compared to a Yukon average of 11 percent in that year. The unemployed are almost all local people, since most people who move into Beaver Creek are posted to the community as part of their jobs. Unemployment for males was reportedly even higher than the average rate.

The youth population numbers only a few people, and very few of them reported being able to find work in 1996.

Above-average unemployment patterns are also reflected in the numbers claiming employment insurance. In 1998 there were 13 claims for employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance), and the numbers were similar through much of the 1990s.

The Beaver Creek population is too small to provide Census-based information on whether work is full-time, full year, or predominantly part-time. Some First Nations people find longer-term employment with the First Nation government, and there are federal and territorial government employees working in full-time positions. Many others in Beaver Creek will only be able to find summer jobs. The provision of tourist services creates some summer jobs, as do local construction and maintenance projects, such as road work and the current building of the new curling rink.

A few people are self-employed -- about 10 percent of the workforce, compared to 13 percent of the overall Yukon labour force.

Most people who are employed in Beaver Creek work in service occupations like home care, sales, and food services, or in social science, education, and government service occupations such as teaching and social work. Other important areas of employment are construction or transportation and trades like auto repair. Some people find employment in management and administration occupations with the First Nation administration or with other government agencies, such as Canada Customs. Others work in primary industry occupations, such as mining, trapping,

or forestry. Very few people work mainly in fields like health or the arts, so it is difficult to identify these occupations separately.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census indicated that about half of those aged 15 years or older had taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. Twenty percent of the 15 years and older population of Beaver Creek said that their highest level of education was some secondary school. About 10 percent reported that they had completed Grade 9 or less. About 20 percent of those living and working in Beaver Creek said they had taken some university-level education.

Future Prospects and Developments

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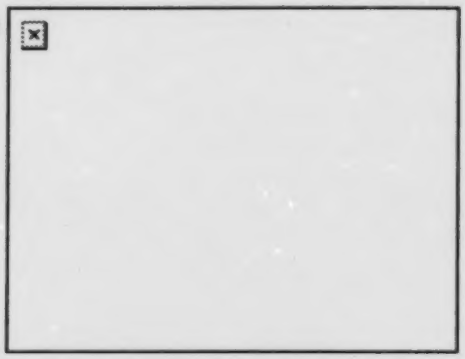

There appears to be little on the horizon to change the profile of the Beaver Creek economy. Tourism is expected to increase as efforts are made across the Yukon to attract more visitors and as more activities are developed in adventure, cultural, and environmental tourism. These developments are likely to increase traffic through the Beaver Creek area to some degree. However, the increase will probably be largely in traffic flowing through to Whitehorse and then on to other tourist destinations. Some further tourism-related services could be developed locally, but the majority of work opportunities will continue to be seasonal. In some regions, winter adventure activities are extending the tourism season into fall and winter. This could result in spill-over activity in Alaska/Yukon border areas.

Developing tourism activities requires skills in operating motels and lodges and in preparing and serving food. In addition, tourists -- especially those travelling from other countries -- expect tourism workers to have good communication skills.

Community Services

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Students can attend school from kindergarten to Grade 8 at the Beaver Creek School and then attend secondary school in Haines Junction or Whitehorse.

Yukon College does not currently have a campus in Beaver Creek. Courses are offered on a request basis. However, the White River First Nation is in the process

of planning and designing an administrative building. They hope to have the College as a partner in their building, delivering courses.

Beaver Creek is served by a community health nurse practitioner who operates clinic hours daily on a part-time basis. The nurse practitioner also provides services in the surrounding area.

The White River First Nation provides social assistance, elder care, and home care services to members.

YTG provides social worker services to Beaver Creek from Haines Junction.

The RCMP operates a detachment in Beaver Creek, staffed by a corporal and a constable. Probation officer and native courtworker services are provided from Whitehorse.

The White River First Nation provides housing and administers community infrastructure such as water, sewer, local road maintenance, and community recreation.

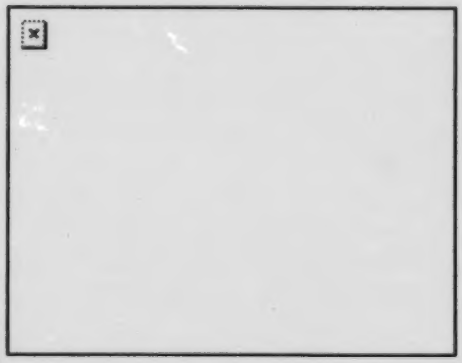
There is a volunteer fire service with a pumper truck and water tanks.

Electricity is provided by diesel generators.

Mail is delivered to the community three times a week.

Banking is provided by the Toronto-Dominion Bank on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with hours varying during the year.

Road access is by an all-weather paved road, the Alaska Highway. Whitehorse is 457 kilometres or a six-hour drive away. To the west, over the Alaska border, it is approximately 480 kilometres to Fairbanks. There is also a gravel airstrip at Beaver Creek, maintained year-round.



Beaver Creek has a general store that operates only in the summer. There are three gas stations offering both regular gasoline and diesel fuel.

One inn has a gift shop selling Yukon crafts.

Individual First Nation members also sell authentic local crafts. They are contacted by asking community members.

There is a swimming pool for summer use. In the winter there is a skating rink and a curling rink. There are three inns, with restaurants, two of which operate year-round. There is also a summer-only hostel that provides beds, TV, and flush toilets. Hostel accommodation is at very reasonable rates.

Services for Business

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Many businesses provide fax service for a fee. Beaver Creek has access to the Internet, but there is a long-distance charge for connection.

The two year-round inns have restaurants, and their rooms have telephones and TVs.

Cost of Living

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Cost of living information is not available for Beaver Creek. However, since the community is a substantial distance from larger centres, costs in general can be expected to be high, relative to Whitehorse.

The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports that there are 20 houses and two duplexes managed by the White River First Nation in the community. The 1996 Census has information on 45 occupied dwellings and provides an average housing value at just over $64,000 for a house with two to three bedrooms. Rent paid for rental housing averaged $470 a month in 1996.

Living in the Community

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Beaver Creek has a variety of recreational activities. There is a community club with a gym. Summer activities include swimming, with a summer pool, camping and hiking just outside one's door. Beaver Creek residents play baseball on two baseball diamonds, and the community sponsors a baseball tournament around the third week of July. In winter, residents enjoy snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, skating, and curling. Beaver Creek is known for its curling bonspiel, held in March every year, which brings together curlers from all over the Yukon and Alaska. Satellite dish television connects residents with world programming, which is especially good for rounding out winter activities.

Climate

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Summers, May to August, are mild. Temperatures can reach 30 degrees Celsius but daytime highs normally average 18 to 23 C. In the summer there can be mosquitoes, black flies, and no-see-ums. Snow can fall, and stay, as early as October and melt as late as April. Daytime winter temperatures, December to February, are usually around minus 24 Celsius but they have been known to drop to minus 55 C.

More Information

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For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

Details about the White River First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

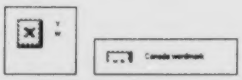
For more information about the White River First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

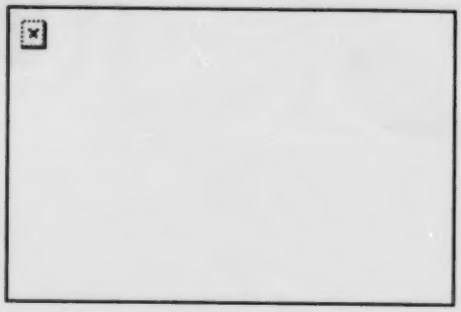
The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-



The Communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information



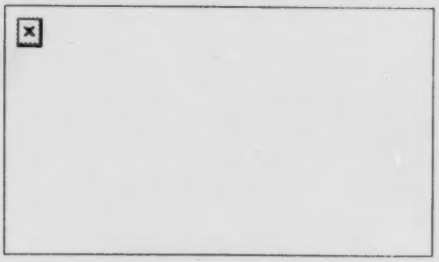
Along the western shore of Kluane Lake, the largest lake in the Yukon, are two of the Territory's smaller communities, Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay. Both communities are located in the Shakwak valley, on the edge of Kluane National Park. Burwash Landing is on the Alaska Highway about 285 kilometres from Whitehorse and 127 kilometres northwest of Haines Junction. Destruction Bay is also on the Highway, 19 kilometres southeast of Burwash Landing and slightly closer to Haines Junction.

Burwash Landing is the home of the Kluane First Nation. Southern Tutchone people have inhabited the Kluane area for many generations. The current site of Burwash Landing was a traditional summer camp location. After a trading post was built in the early 1900s, the First Nations people began to settle nearby. The site was made administrative centre for the Kluane area during construction of the Alaska Highway.

Destruction Bay has a shorter history. It was established as a centre for construction and maintenance on the Alaska Highway, and that remains its primary role today.

People

Top



The population of Burwash Landing was 81 in 1998, down a little from the previous year. Population numbers have not changed much during the 1990s. Destruction Bay shows a somewhat different picture, with the population averaging 36 in 1998 and declining through the 1990s.

The 1996 Census indicated that Kluane First Nation members made up more than

two-thirds of the Burwash Landing population. As the Kluane First Nation's home, Burwash Landing has a fairly stable population, although some adults move to other communities to look for work. Some families also move so that their children can attend higher grades, since the local school goes to Grade 8. The 1996 Census reported that more than 70 percent of the population of Burwash Landing had lived there in 1991. Others had moved in from elsewhere in the Yukon, possibly a reflection of people returning to the community after working elsewhere for a number of years.

The population of Destruction Bay is too small for there to be detailed Census information.

Forty-six percent of the population of Burwash Landing is female, below the Yukon-wide average of 49 percent. Destruction Bay has an even lower rate of female community members, with just 38 percent at the end of 1998.

The age distribution of Burwash Landing reflects the lack of work opportunities for local people, as well as movement out of the area by younger First Nation people, temporarily at least. Most leave in order to look elsewhere for work in the money economy or to further their education. The proportion of people in the younger prime working ages of 25 to 44 years is 32 percent of the total. This is lower than the overall Yukon average of 36 percent for that age group. Burwash Landing also has a smaller proportion of children or youth. Just 16 percent of the population is aged 14 years or under, and a further 9 percent are in the 15-to-24 age group.

Older people are over-represented in Burwash Landing in comparison with the Yukon average. Thirty-three percent were aged 45 to 64 and a further 10 percent were over 65 years of age at the end of 1998. This is a further indication that working-age people have been leaving the community, while the elders remain.

Destruction Bay also has few young people in the population -- just 8 percent aged 14 or under and another 8 percent aged 15 to 24. The largest sector (46 percent) of the Destruction Bay population is 45 to 64 years of age. The count at the end of 1998 showed no one over the age of 65.

First Nations

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The Burwash Landing/Destruction Bay area is the home of the Southern Tutchone people of the Kluane First Nation. The Southern Tutchone belong to the Athapaskan language family. For thousands of years, the Southern Tutchone people lived their yearly round throughout the Kluane Lake area, hunting, fishing and gathering food. The present site of Burwash Landing was a summer stopping place. After a trading post was built in the early 1900s, the First Nations people moved close to the post and began to live a less nomadic life. The site was made the administrative centre for the Kluane area when the Alaska Highway was built.

The establishment of Kluane National Park in the southwest corner of the Yukon Territory, bordered by Kluane Lake (Yukon's largest lake) and the Alaska and Haines highways, effectively meant hardship for the First Nations people of the area. Left with only a narrow margin along the western shores of Kluane Lake, the people lost much of their hunting and trapping livelihood. They were forced to turn to other areas and to rely increasingly on fishing to make a living from the land.

Today, the Kluane First Nation people of Burwash Landing carry on much of the traditional way of life of their ancestors. They have been active in reviving their language, culture, and traditions, and in passing this information on to the children. Education has been a priority of the KFN. Secondary and post-secondary education for members of the First Nation is actively supported and promoted. The KFN has a number of university graduates, and Burwash Landing was the site of the first First-Nation-run school in the Yukon. The Kluane First Nation provides services to its membership through its health and social department, education, economic development, and capital projects programs. The Kluane First Nation also provides housing and municipal services to its membership.

In April 1999 there were 138 registered members of the Kluane First Nation. Close to 70 of the members live in other communities.

The Kluane First Nation has not yet completed their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements, but it is expected to do so in the near future. The leadership of the First Nation has been active in the Council of Yukon First Nations and other Yukon-wide and national bodies.

The Economy

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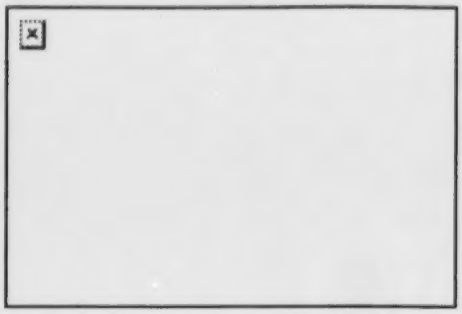
The economy of Burwash Landing is essentially a traditional subsistence economy, and hunting and fishing supply about 60 to 80 percent of the residents' food needs.

Another traditional activity, trapping, has declined due to the drop in fur prices.



The First Nation administration provides most employment. The Kluane First Nation also owns the Dalan campground. Much employment is seasonal and depends on the tourist and construction season. Some people find work in the summer providing services to tourists visiting Kluane National Park or travelling the Alaska Highway. The Kluane Museum of Natural History is the community's best-known tourist attraction and a source of some summer employment. It features an excellent wildlife display, fossils, and a gift shop with a large selection of local First Nation handicrafts. A resort/hotel, restaurant, and store in the area offer services for travelers.

The school and community health centre provide some employment at Destruction Bay. In addition, there are services for travelers on the Highway. The Yukon government highway maintenance camp employs people year-round.

Although the Alaska Highway is open year-round, traffic drops off outside the prime tourist season and some businesses close from October to May.

Many people move away from Burwash Landing in order to look for work or to continue their education.

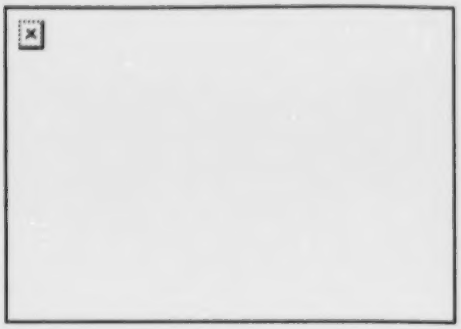
Work

Top

About 70 percent of Burwash Landing's adult population (those 15 years of age and over) reported that they were involved in the formal labour market at the time of the 1996 Census. This is lower than the 81-percent rate for the Yukon overall, reflecting the limited money economy in the community. Because of the small number of residents in the community, the Census did not report on unemployment. However, other information points to the lack of jobs.

The 1996 Census provided no details about work characteristics for people living in Destruction Bay, but other information sources indicate that there is work at the school and at the health centre. There is also highway maintenance work with the Yukon government.

In both communities, the number of people claiming employment insurance is too



As noted, the Burwash Landing population is too small to permit Census-based information on whether work is full-time, full year, or predominantly part-time. Some First Nations people find longer-term employment with the First Nation administration. Many others are only able to find summer jobs providing tourist services or on small local construction and maintenance projects. Some community residents have found work on the Shakwak Project (reconstruction of the Alaska Highway).

The 1996 Census reported no information on earnings for people living in Burwash Landing or Destruction Bay.

A few people reported that they were self-employed.

With so few people working in Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay, occupation information is very limited. Some work in management and administration fields with the Kluane First Nation. Others work on services for First Nations people. There are also people working in teaching and nursing at Destruction Bay.

Commercial services for tourists and travelers provide work in sales, accommodation, and food service occupations, and some people find work in maintenance fields.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census provides information about levels of education completed for Burwash Landing only. About half of the community's population aged 15 years or older have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. Twenty-five percent of the 15-plus population said that their highest level of education was some secondary school. Others reported that they had completed Grade 9 or less.

Numbers in the 15-to-24 age group are too small for there to be information from the Census about whether they were attending school or pursuing other formal education in 1996.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

There appears to be little on the horizon to change the economic profiles of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay. Tourist travel is expected to increase as a result of efforts to expand tourism across the Yukon. Developing more activities, especially in the areas of adventure, cultural, and environmental tourism, could also boost tourist numbers. The communities' location close to Kluane National Park offers some potential that tourism developments will increase traffic through the Burwash Landing/Destruction Bay area. Further tourism-related services could be developed locally, but the bulk of work opportunities will still be seasonal.

Education and communication skills are increasingly important in attracting tourists and giving them good service. It will be important to look at ways to use local knowledge of the Burwash Landing area to provide guiding services, and to build on traditions, arts, and crafts to interest tourists. Older people with an interest in a range of cultural activities are a growing sector in tourism, and these people demand a high level of services.

Community Services

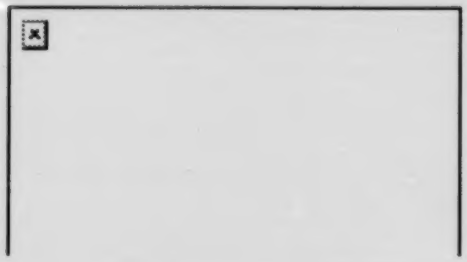
Top

Kluane Lake School in Destruction Bay serves both Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing. Burwash students come to school by private vehicle. The school offers kindergarten to Grade 8. Students can complete secondary school in Haines Junction or Whitehorse. Some students board in the larger communities, and other families move with their children.

The Haines Junction Campus of Yukon College also serves Destruction Bay and Burwash Landing.

A new community centre has recently been built in Burwash Landing. It has a recreation hall for community events, a weight room, a common room, a volunteer library, basketball court, skating rink, and offices.

Destruction Bay's volunteer library is located in the Post Office.



Destruction Bay has a community health centre staffed by a nurse practitioner. The health centre operates a daily clinic and provides community

health services. The nurse practitioner also provides services to the Burwash Landing health centre, running a clinic three days a week. Emergency services are provided from the Destruction Bay health centre.

The Kluane First Nation delivers social assistance, elder care, and home care services to its members.

Daycare services are available in Burwash Landing.

YTG provides social worker services to Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay from Haines Junction. The RCMP serves Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay from the Haines Junction detachment. Probation officer and native courtworker services are provided from Whitehorse.

The Kluane First Nation provides housing to its membership and administers community infrastructure such as water, sewer, local road maintenance, and community recreation, in Burwash Landing. There is a Roman Catholic church in Burwash Landing, with a small attached museum.

Burwash Landing has a new fire hall. The fire service is run by volunteers who have a fire truck and access to well water.

Electricity is provided by diesel generators.

Mail is delivered to the communities three times a week, and both Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay have post offices.

The Toronto-Dominion Bank is located in the Kluane First Nation administration building and is open Monday and Friday.

Road access is by an all-weather paved road, the Alaska Highway. From Burwash to Whitehorse is 285 kilometres, or a four-hour drive. Haines Junction is 127 kilometres from Burwash Landing. Destruction Bay is 19 kilometres closer to both of the larger communities.

An airstrip is located one kilometre from Burwash Landing.

Duke River Trading, located in Burwash Landing, is a general store carrying mostly groceries. The store also carries souvenirs, provides laundry facilities, and operates an RV park with full hook-up and showers.

Burwash Landing Resort provides hotel/motel accommodation, camping, RV park with hook-up, restaurant, and lounge. Burwash Landing also has a cafeteria catering to bus tours.

Camping facilities are offered at the Dalan Campground.

There is a service station located on the highway.

In Destruction Bay, Sejah's Services and RV Park and the Talbot Arms Motel offer a range of accommodation, RV parking, restaurants, laundromat services, a general store, and a service station.

Services for Business

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Internet and email access, fax service, and photocopying are available for a small fee at the Kluane First Nation office in Burwash Landing. Hall rental for meetings is also available for a fee. Other access to fax services is at the Duke River Trading Store and Burwash Landing Resort.

The Burwash Landing Resort and Sejah's Services are open for the summer season. Year-round business accommodation is available at the Talbot Arms Motel in Destruction Bay.

Cost of Living

Top

Cost of living information is not available for Burwash Landing or Destruction Bay. However, since many people in both communities buy the bulk of their supplies in Haines Junction or Whitehorse, information about the cost of living in Haines Junction provides a general guide to costs in Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay.

Yukon Region First Nations Profiles and the 1996 Census report 41 houses in Burwash Landing. Unfortunately, that total was reduced in June 1999 when a forest fire destroyed half a dozen buildings in the community, including five houses. In Destruction Bay most housing is privately owned and several are rental units.

Living in the Community

Top

Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay are home by choice to many people and for many reasons. The Kluane First Nation people made Burwash Landing their home.

Others who moved to Burwash Landing or Destruction Bay really enjoy the life they lead in the community. Many like the small community; they are comfortable in small communities and like the feeling of being part of the community; Some have stable employment, which keeps them in the community.

Since the winters are long and cold, indoor activities are important in keeping busy. Many people like reading, baking, carving, and sewing. Some First Nation women still do bead work and sew with native tanned hides. They make moccasins, hats, and many other small handicrafts like necklaces and hairpins. Some make baskets from birch bark.

Outdoor activities in the winter include snowmobiling, skating, and ice-fishing.

When the weather is warmer and there are long daylight hours in spring and summer, people spend a lot of time outdoors after the long cold winter. Residents may plant their gardens or greenhouses. With a lake right at the community, fishing is popular. Some people go sport fishing, some fish commercially, and some operate fishing trips for a fee. Camping is another activity for many. In August people go hunting. In late summer you will find many people out picking berries, such as blueberries, cranberries, and blackberries.

Summer is also the time when people work at summer seasonal jobs, and this is a busy time for private businesses.

Climate

Top

During winter the temperatures range from mild to very cold, reaching minus 46 Celsius during a very cold spell. The wind often blows from the north in the winter and can create high wind chills. Occasionally there are chinooks from the south and the temperature can rise to plus 1 C. Summer months are mild, generally around 19 C for daily temperatures. Winds are from the south in the summer. July is often a particularly rainy month, but it can rain at any time.

The communities of Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay can also be very windy, with winds regularly gusting to 55 kilometres per hour.

More Information

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For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Details about the Kluane First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For further information about the Kluane First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

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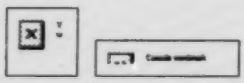

The Communities of Carcross and Tagish

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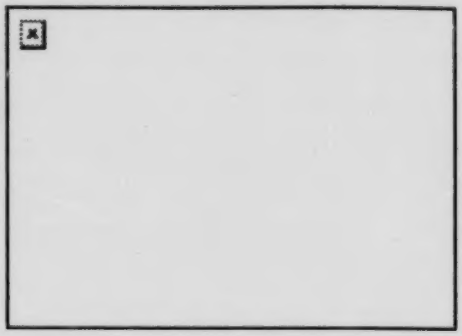


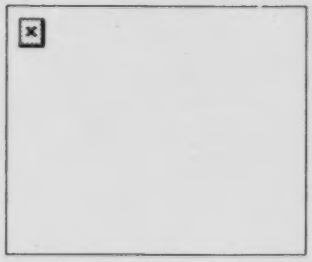
At the northern tip of Bennett Lake, on the old Gold Rush trail, lies the village of Carcross. The settlement of Tagish is about 30 kilometres east of Carcross, and further downstream on the chain of lakes that feed into the Yukon River. Carcross is the larger of the two communities. It lies 74 kilometres south of Whitehorse on the Klondike Highway and about the same distance north of Skagway, Alaska. Tagish, located off the main highways, is a mix of year-round residents and part-year cottage residents.

Once a hunting and fishing camp for Inland Tlingit and Tagish people, Carcross became a key stopover and supply centre during the Klondike Gold Rush. The White Pass and Yukon railway station was built in 1901, and Carcross became a major transportation centre. Although Carcross still provides some highway services for the South Klondike Highway, tourism has taken over as a mainstay of the local economy.

Tagish also attracts tourists, as well as cottage owners from Whitehorse. In addition, many people live in the community and commute into Carcross or Whitehorse for work.

People

Top



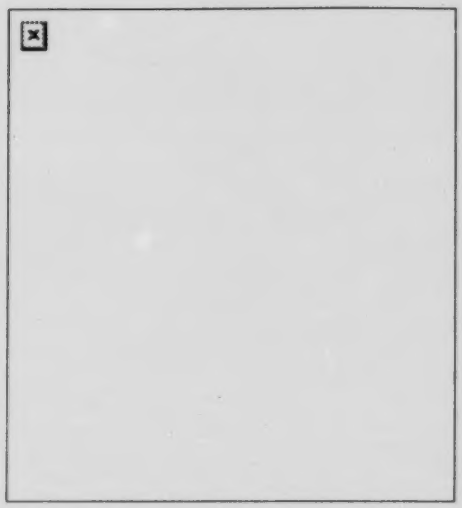
The population of Carcross averaged 423 in 1998. This is a small drop from the previous couple of years. However, it represents an increase from the 1991 average of 360. The population of Tagish averaged 158 in 1998. Tagish has experienced consistent population growth through the 1990s, due to its increasing attraction as a place to live year-round. Carcross is also increasingly a commuting community.

People belonging to the Carcross/Tagish First Nation make up about half of the

total population of these communities. This compares with a 20-percent representation of First Nations people in the overall Yukon population.

The 1996 Census showed that most people in Carcross and Tagish had lived in their communities or elsewhere in the Yukon since 1991 or earlier. Fewer than 10 percent said they had come from outside the Yukon between 1991 and 1996, compared to 22 percent Yukon-wide.

Young people aged 15 to 24 are 15 percent of the Carcross population, higher than the 13-percent proportion for the overall Yukon population. The proportion of children aged 14 or younger is 21 percent, only slightly below the Yukon-wide average. People over 65 make up 9 percent of the population, significantly above the Yukon average. The major difference between the age structure of the Carcross population and that of the Yukon-wide population is the relatively small proportion of people in the 25-to-44 age group. Only 30 percent fall into this range in Carcross compared with 36 percent for the Yukon.



Tagish has an older population than the Yukon average, reflecting some movement of older people into the community. Thirteen percent of people living in Tagish are over 65 years of age, and 34 percent are aged 45 to 64. By comparison, the 65-plus population is only 5 percent of the total Yukon population, and those aged 45 to 64 make up 23 percent of the total.

About 50 percent of the people in Carcross and 51 percent in Tagish are female, a higher proportion than the 49-percent female representation in the total Yukon population.

First Nations

Top

The community of Carcross is the home of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation. The original inhabitants of this area are the Tagish people who belong to the Tagish linguistic grouping of the Athapaskan language family. The area also became the home of some of the Tlingit traders from Southeast Alaska who ventured into the interior of the Yukon for trade purposes, perhaps for 200 to 300 years prior to contact in the Yukon. Today many of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation people are descendants of both Tagish and Tlingit. In April 1999, there were 508 registered

members of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, about 300 of whom live outside the two communities. The Carcross/Tagish First Nation is affiliated with the Tlingit Tribal Council, the Daxa Nation.

The current site of Carcross was a seasonal stopping place in early times. It is remembered as an area where people came during the caribou herd seasonal migrations. The area is also recalled in the legend "Game Mother" as the very important site where the many different animal species were born. The Tlingit clans who settled in this area brought with them their social organizational systems, which continue to be a strong aspect of the Tagish/Tlingit culture. The potlatch also remains a very important institution that survived despite its ban by the federal government from the 1890s to 1951. The Tagish and Tlingit people enjoyed the abundance of fish present in the numerous lakes of the Southern Lakes system. The Tagish people traded with the Tlingits and often acted as the middlemen between the coast and interior. Many Tagish First Nation people were packers for the prospectors on the Chilkoot Trail during the Gold Rush.

The town of Carcross is not the traditional village site of the Tagish people. Carcross was in fact the seasonal hunting grounds for caribou. The original village site was in Tagish. Carcross was established during the 1898 Gold Rush when the White Pass Railway was built. Many of the Yukon's First Nations people found themselves in Carcross attending the Choutla Residential School, which was established in 1901 by the Anglican Bishop Bompas and closed in the 1960s.

The Carcross/Tagish First Nation is currently negotiating their First Nation Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreement with the federal and Yukon governments. Their final agreements will follow the outline of the Umbrella Final Agreement but with specific provisions that are unique to the environment and to the people of this area. This First Nation has been active in teaching children their language and culture through school programs, and has formed one of the most famous dance and singing groups of the Yukon.

The Economy

Top

For many years, Carcross was a vibrant transportation centre for road, rail, and water links. For a time, the community also had its own mining boom. Now Carcross relies on tourism, based on its location on the South Klondike Highway. This popular route links Whitehorse with Skagway, Alaska. Employment in Carcross and Tagish is based mainly on summer tourism, although there is some

skiing and adventure tourism in the off-season.

Government services for the local population and administration of the Carcross/Tagish First Nation are also important in the economy. They provide 30 to 40 percent of total employment. Other people are employed in education and health services.

Some Tagish people work outside the community, often commuting to Whitehorse.

Carcross/Tagish First Nation people also participate in traditional activities, and some supply a part of their food needs through hunting and fishing.

Work

Top

The proportion of people aged 15 or older who are involved in the formal labour market is substantially lower than the Yukon average. This reflects both the limited economy of Carcross and Tagish and the older-than-average population. In 1996, 81 percent of Yukon adults said they were active in the labour market. The proportions in the Carcross and Tagish areas ranged from 60 to 70 percent. Unemployment is also significantly higher in both Carcross and Tagish than the average for the Yukon. In the 1996 Census, over 30 percent of the workforce said they were unemployed. This is close to three times the Yukon-wide rate of 11 percent. Men reported even higher unemployment.

An average of 36 people claimed employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance) in Carcross in 1998, and a further 19 in Tagish. The number of community people claiming employment insurance has remained fairly steady for a few years. The relatively high number of employment insurance claimants in Carcross and Tagish is a further indication of the seasonal nature of much work in the communities.

The communities' young people, those aged 15 to 24, are less likely to be involved in the labour market than are youth in the Yukon as a whole. About half of Carcross youth said they were in the formal labour market, compared to 70 percent Yukon-wide. There is no measure of unemployment for this group, but the low involvement indicates that few jobs are available.

The 1996 Census provided no measure of full-time, full year work for the communities of Carcross and Tagish. However, other information clearly indicates that much of the work in the communities is related to tourism, and therefore is

seasonal.

Information on self-employment, drawn from the Census, shows that a substantial number of people in Carcross itself are self-employed. However, there is little self-employment among people in the surrounding area.

Earnings information was not available from the 1996 Census.

In both communities, the largest occupational area is sales and service occupations linked to tourism -- for example, food and accommodation service jobs. The First Nation is a large employer. Another consistent employment area is transportation and trades, which includes driving and construction or maintenance trades. Other than these groupings, the numbers reported in the Census are too small to indicate what occupations people follow.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census showed that a little over 30 percent of Carcross and Tagish people aged 15 and over had taken some non-university post-secondary training. Approximately 10 percent had taken some university-level education, but the numbers are too small to indicate how many had completed degrees. A further 30 percent listed secondary school (grades 9 and above) as their highest level of education. About 15 percent responded that their highest level of education was under Grade 9.

In 1996, about 50 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 years reported that they were attending school, a little lower than the Yukon average.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Tourism is the primary area with potential for economic growth in Carcross. Work opportunities for local people could be increased by building on existing tourism activities and developing more winter activities to extend the season.

Carcross is located in an early and well-established mining area. There is little mining currently. However, some exploration work is being carried out. Whether production starts up depends on increases in metal prices.

Employment opportunities are currently limited in the Carcross/Tagish area. There is a need to develop long-term work for local residents, including First Nations

people. The Carcross-Tagish Development Corporation, the economic development arm of the First Nation, is currently planning business development that it hopes will create employment opportunities.

Since tourism is a potential source of some jobs, tourism skills will be important. Good communication skills, small business management skills, and computer skills should not only support tourism development in the local communities but also enable people to find work in Whitehorse.

Community Services

Top

Education from kindergarten to Grade 9 is available at the Carcross School. Students go to Whitehorse to complete Grade 12.

Post-secondary education is provided through the Carcross Campus of Yukon College. The college offers basic education programs and works with the Carcross/Tagish First Nation to offer courses with an emphasis on community development. These include First Nations training, early childhood development, computer training, tourism, employment preparation, small business, and art courses. Students contribute to community development projects like the publication of a newspaper to boost tourism.

Health care is provided through the community health centre in Carcross. It offers daily service and is staffed by two nurses. A nurse provides service once a week in Tagish. The health centre also supplies 24-hour emergency service. A volunteer ambulance service in Carcross covers Tagish and the surrounding area.

YTG Health and Social Services provides social worker services in Carcross.

The Carcross/Tagish First Nation offers social services to members who live in the Carcross and Tagish area. Services include social assistance, in-home care, counseling, and referral. There is a daycare centre. Native courtworker services are provided out of Whitehorse.

Policing is provided by the RCMP detachment, staffed by a corporal and two constables, with secretarial support. Probation officer services are provided out of Whitehorse.

The Carcross fire department has a chief and 10 volunteer firefighters. Tagish has its own volunteer fire department.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies hydroelectric power from the Whitehorse dam.

Recreation facilities in Carcross include a community club, a visitors centre at the White Pass & Yukon Railway station, seasonal swimming pool, ski trails, and a library.

Recreation facilities in Tagish include a community club, library, hockey rink, and baseball diamond.

The Southern Lakes Justice Committee offers an alternative to existing justice-related services. Its volunteer members and one employee run a variety of restorative justice programs that provide both victims and offenders different options within the existing criminal justice system.

Carcross is home to the territory's newest radio station. CIKO-FM is operated entirely by volunteers and is housed in the community school.

Carcross has a combined gas station, fast food restaurant, and grocery store that is open year-round. Off-sales, propane, video rentals, and banking services (via an ATM) are available at the same location. RV facilities are available from May to September. The Caribou Hotel, one of the oldest operating hotels in the Yukon, has both a bar and restaurant. The restaurant is normally open only during the summer season. Other seasonal businesses sell locally-made items to tourists.

Summer accommodation is available at a lodge a few miles north of Carcross. A number of B & B establishments cater to summer traffic. Other small businesses, such as a bakery and restaurant and a wildlife park, are open during the summer months.

Gas, video rentals, postal services, and convenience-store groceries are available in Tagish. However, residents tend to buy most of their groceries in Whitehorse. RV facilities are available during the summer. Other accommodation, including B & B

establishments, cater to summer visitors. Tagish boasts a marina and a local tourism operator who specializes in winter dog-mushing trips.

Carcross has a small community airstrip.

Services for Business

Top

Fax and photocopying facilities are not available to the public in Carcross on a fee-for-service basis. Tagish residents have access to these and other business-related services through the Tagish Community Association.

Carcross has regular landline telephone service. Tagish relies entirely on a cellular phone system, which is not always reliable and can be expensive.

Local dial-up Internet service exists in Carcross, but the limited number of ports available to users in the community makes access to the Internet difficult on occasion. Many agencies have installed dedicated lines to ensure good Internet access.

The Southern Lakes Chamber of Commerce is a good source of information about the business climate and business opportunities within the Southern Lakes area.

Cost of Living

Top

Information about specific costs in Carcross and Tagish is not available. However, both communities are close enough to Whitehorse that people can do much of their purchasing in the Yukon's capital city. The cost of living in the two communities, therefore, is likely to be only slightly higher than in Whitehorse.

The 1996 Census reported 120 occupied private dwellings in Carcross and a further 82 in Tagish. Information from the 1996 Census suggests that houses in the Village of Carcross are valued, on average, at $120,000. Most houses have two bedrooms. Information on house prices outside the village is not available from the Census. According to local information, the Carcross/Tagish First Nation has 106 houses under its administration. Rental for housing in Carcross averaged $440 a month in 1996.

Living in the Community

Top

The Carcross/Tagish area is noted for its outstanding

natural beauty. The rivers, lakes and mountains provide incredible opportunities for outdoors enthusiasts of all varieties: hikers, skiers, recreational boaters, fishers, hunters, windsurfers, and more. At the same time, the close proximity of the Yukon's capital, Whitehorse, means that the benefits of a city are just a short drive away. Similarly, the coastal community of Skagway, Alaska, is only a 90-minute drive south of Carcross across the famous White Pass.

Although both Carcross and Tagish share problems common to many small northern communities, people tend to look out for each other. Volunteer organizations thrive in both communities, a testament to the commitment residents are prepared to make to the place they call home.

Climate

Top

Carcross and Tagish are very close to Whitehorse. While no independent climate information is available for the smaller communities, climate information for Whitehorse gives a fairly good indication of conditions. In addition, Carcross experiences some coastal weather influence, resulting in milder winter weather and generally a little less snow than in Whitehorse.

Weather reports for 1997 showed the average daily temperature in January in Whitehorse was minus 20.2 degrees Celsius, while in July the daily average was plus 15 degrees. The averages are based on a 24-hour day, so daytime temperatures are often substantially higher. The record high was 27.5 degrees, and the record low was minus 47 degrees. Whitehorse has a relatively dry climate. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 242.4 millimetres. This included 150.9 millimetres of rain and 139.2 centimetres of snow.

More Information

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Details about the Carcross/Tagish First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For further information about the Carcross/Tagish First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For information about the Carcross Community Campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

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The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

The Community of Carmacks

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

Carmacks has served many functions over the years, including campsite, trading post, coal mining community, and steam-boat-refueling stop. Today it is a highway service centre and the home of the Little Salmon/ Carmacks First Nation. Carmacks is located at the confluence of the Yukon and Nordenskiold rivers. It lies 180 kilometres north of Whitehorse on the Klondike Highway, at its junction with the Robert Campbell Highway.

Originally, the Carmacks area was part of the hunting and fishing territory of the Northern Tutchone people. The site of Carmacks itself was an important trading stop on the river trade routes of the Coastal Tlingit and the Northern and Interior Kutchin. The modern community is named for George Carmacks, one of the discoverers of gold in the Klondike. In 1893, three years before the gold discovery, Carmacks found a seam of coal at Tantalus Butte, at the mouth of the Nordenskiold. He built a cabin which grew into a trading post -- Carmack's Post.

During the Klondike Gold Rush, "Carmack's Landing" became a stop on the way to Dawson and a wood camp to feed the steam-driven sternwheelers. Later, it was a stop on the Overland Trail between Dawson and the rail end at Whitehorse. When the first leg of the Klondike Highway was completed in 1950, Carmacks became a major service centre. At that time the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation people took up permanent residence on the north bank of the Yukon River, where most still live. The business section of Carmacks is on the south bank.

People

Top

In 1998, the Carmacks population averaged 461, slightly lower than the previous year when the population stood at 476. The population has remained fairly constant through much of the 1990s.

In 1996 the Census indicated that over 70 percent of the people living in Carmacks lived there five years earlier. About 13 percent of the 1996 population had come from outside the Yukon at some time in the 1991 to 1996 period.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation makes up at least 65 percent of the total population of Carmacks. This is significantly higher than the 20-percent overall representation of First Nations in the Yukon population.

Carmacks has a very young population in comparison to the Yukon as a whole. Twenty-eight percent of community residents are children aged 14 or younger, compared to the Yukon average of 22 percent in this age group. A further 15 percent of the Carmacks population is in the 15-to-25 age group, compared to 13 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

The prime working age population in Carmacks is proportionately lower than the Yukon average, reflecting both difficulty in obtaining work in Carmacks and some movement of adults to seek work elsewhere for at least part of the time. Thirty-three percent of Carmacks people fall into the 25-to-44 age range, and 18 percent into the 45-to-64 range. In comparison, the Yukon overall has 36 percent in the 25-to-44 age group and 23 percent in the 45-to-64 age group. People over 65 make up 6 percent of the Carmacks population, slightly higher than the Yukon average.

At the end of 1998, 49 percent of the Carmacks population was female, the same as the Yukon-wide percentage.

First Nations

Top

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation is affiliated with the Northern Tutchone Council. As of April 1999, the registered population of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation was 502. Almost half live outside the community at this time.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks people are Northern Tutchone, part of the Athapaskan language grouping. They were and remain people who are very much reliant on the Yukon River and its rich salmon resources.

The Northern Tutchone people of this area are closely related to the Northern Tutchone groups of the Na-cho N'yak Dun and the Selkirk First Nations. As well, they are closely related to the Southern Tutchone people of nearby Champagne, Klukshu, and Aishihik, with whom they traded and often intermarried. A system of

land and water routes connected all of these adjacent areas.

Carmacks was an important stopover site on the Yukon River for those travelling to the Dawson goldfields during the gold rush of 1898. Later, it also became an important refueling place for the riverboats that traveled between Whitehorse and Dawson City. Many First Nations people worked in wood-camps supplying fuel during this era.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation completed their land claims negotiations, and signed their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement in July 1997. Their agreement follows the structure of the Umbrella Final Agreement but contains provisions unique to the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. An example of a specific provision is the Special Management Area to be established for the Nordenskiold Wetland Habitat Protection Area. The Little Salmon/Carmacks traditional territory is rich in renewable and non-renewable resources, and the First Nation is currently active in establishing and building co-management regimes with other levels of government.

The Economy

Top

The Carmacks economy is fairly limited in range. Carmacks is a service centre on the Klondike Highway. In addition, there is government activity in the fields of local services and administration of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation's activities. Tourism provides some summer jobs. Carmacks is located in a mineral-rich area, and seasonal employment has come from mining exploration, as well as from providing services to exploration crews. The amount of employment available from this source depends on the highly variable economic state of the mining industry.

Government services account for over 40 percent of jobs in the community. The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation employs people in administration and in providing services such as elder care. The First Nation also operates an interpretive centre and traditional crafts shop. Other government services employees work for the Yukon Territorial Government or with the Carmacks municipal government.

Tourism is a sizeable part of local economic activity. About 10 percent of employment is found in accommodation and food services, close to the Yukon

average. Other services, largely recreation, provide 6 percent of employment, which is also similar to the Yukon share. Trade provides a further 8 percent, a little lower than the Yukon-wide share.

The employment shares provided in Carmacks by mining, forestry, transportation, communication, and construction sectors are similar to the Yukon average. Some industries employ so few people that the shares cannot be measured.

Traditional activities play a role in the economy and lifestyle of First Nations people in Carmacks, and a significant proportion of residents hunt and fish to supply some of their families' food needs.

Work

Top

At the time of the 1996 Census, about 78 percent of adults in Carmacks, those aged 15 and over, reported that they were involved in the labour market. This is lower than the overall Yukon proportion of 81 percent. Reported unemployment, at 15 percent, was higher than the 1996 Yukon average of 11 percent at the time of the Census. Both measures, involvement in the labour market and unemployment, reflect the small number of jobs and especially long-term jobs in the community. The work situation is particularly weak for men living in Carmacks. They reported an unemployment rate of 21 percent, compared to the overall Yukon male unemployment rate of 12 percent at the time of the Census.

Young people are also less likely to be found in the Carmacks labour market than in the labour market for the Yukon as a whole. In 1996, about 62 percent of the 15-to-24 age group in Carmacks reported that they were in the labour market, compared to 70 percent across the Yukon. This, too, reflects the shortage of long-term jobs in the community.

On average in 1998, 31 individuals in Carmacks made claims for employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). The number of people claiming employment insurance has averaged above 30 for much of the 1990s.

Relatively little work in Carmacks is full-time and full year, reflecting the lack of

long-term jobs and the seasonal nature of tourism and mining exploration. The 1996 Census reported that people working full-time, full year in Carmacks accounted for only 31 percent of all workers, far lower than the 44 percent seen for the Yukon as a whole.

Self-employment, at 8 percent of all employment in Carmacks, is quite a bit lower than the Yukon average of 13 percent.

Average employment income also reflects the lack of long-term jobs and the prevalence of seasonal work. Average employment income for all workers in Carmacks is about 70 percent of the Yukon average which was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those working on a full-time, full year basis, earnings in Carmacks are about 81 percent of the average full-time, full year Yukon earnings which were estimated at about $44,300 in 1998.

Work in Carmacks leans towards occupations involved in government services and tourism. At the time of the 1996 Census, about 26 percent of total employment in the community was in sales and service occupations, including food preparation and service fields. This compares with 25 percent in the Yukon as a whole. Management occupations in Carmacks (10 percent of total employment) and administration occupations (12 percent) reflect the importance of government work.

Government services work also employs people in occupations such as teaching, social work, or community work. The social sciences occupational field accounts for 16 percent of employment in Carmacks, compared to 10 percent Yukon-wide.

Mining, forestry, and trapping occupations have an 8-percent share of employment in Carmacks compared to an average of 4 percent for the Yukon. Construction and other trades, such as auto repair, along with transportation occupations, provide 22 percent of local employment. This is higher than the 18 percent found, on average, in the Yukon.

Education

Top

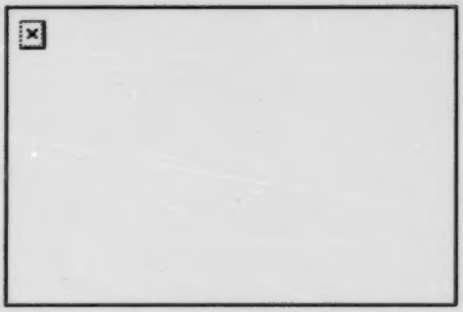
Information reported in the 1996 Census shows that 39 percent of Carmacks people aged 15 years and up have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. About 10 percent have taken some university-level education. More than half of the latter group, or 6 percent of the population aged 15 years and over, had completed at least a bachelor-level degree. About 30 percent of those aged 15

and up said their highest level of education included some secondary school. Thirteen percent reported completion of Grade 9 or less.

Half of the 15-to-24 age group in Carmacks reported that they were attending school or taking some education during 1996, somewhat lower than the Yukon average.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top



Carmacks can expect to reap some benefit from tourism, which is increasing across the Yukon. The community is a stop on the Klondike Highway to Dawson City and could look to tourism growth along that historic route. Carmacks is also one of the few resupply stops on the increasingly popular Yukon River canoe route from Whitehorse to Dawson. With growing offshore interest in Yukon wilderness, more people are expected to be drawn to the Yukon for longer stays. Carmacks could take advantage of this trend by developing adventure tourism and winter activities and by establishing a cultural presence to add to the existing history-related attractions. Providing quality services for older and more sophisticated tourists will also be important in increasing future tourism.

While all mining is currently in the doldrums, an active mining area around Carmacks is being explored. Southeast of Casino Silver, the Minto mine is under construction. It is a significant copper-silver porphyry deposit, with minor gold. Further southeast, the Western Copper Holding Carmacks Copper project is undergoing final environmental assessment as a copper-gold development. Southwest is the Mount Nansen gold mine, a gold-silver mine that was in production in 1998 but is currently suspended.

Changing the higher-than-average unemployment pattern means tackling the issue of few long-term jobs. The First Nation has established an economic development arm, the Carmacks Development Corporation, to work towards creating employment for First Nations people. The corporation has purchased heavy equipment and trucks for its own construction and development projects, as well as to enable the First Nation to bid on external contracts. Further initiatives include a partnership agreement with Pioneer Helicopters and successful negotiations with Western Copper Holdings.

Currently discussions are being held regarding the purchase and setting up of a local sawmill. Employment and economic opportunities will increase further as more responsibilities are devolved to the First Nation through the land claims and self-government agreements. Benefits will filter through the community as a whole in the form of new private enterprise and cottage industry opportunities.

Both economic growth and expanding tourism activities in Carmacks will require workers who are able to create and run small businesses. The skills and knowledge that will be useful include basic financial skills and communication skills. Local or traditional knowledge will be important in producing crafts, educating and entertaining visitors, and providing interesting outdoor activities that encourage tourists to visit Carmacks or to stay longer in the community.

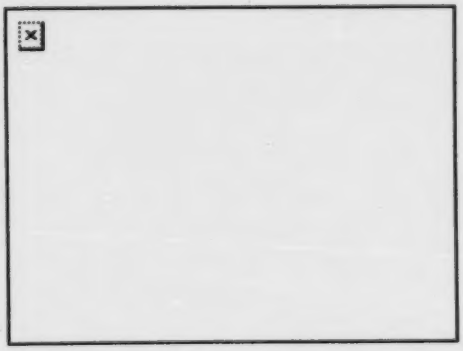
Community Services

Top

Kindergarten to Grade 12 is available at Tantalus School in Carmacks. The school has a gymnasium, library, and computer lab. Like all Yukon schools, the core curriculum (80%) follows the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, and students are eligible to write B.C. departmental exams.

The Carmacks Campus of Yukon College has provided adult education programs to the community since 1986. The Campus's principal community partnership is with the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. College staff have worked closely with the First Nation to develop and deliver training courses and programs designed to enhance local ability to administer land claim and self-government agreements. Other programs at the Campus include academic upgrading, employability skills, general interest programs, mine training, computer skills, first aid, accounting, pre-trades courses, and job-related training.

The Community Health Centre, which operates clinics from Monday to Friday, provides local health care. The centre also provides after-hours emergency service and ambulance dispatch. Occasional dental clinics are offered by dentists from Whitehorse.



Policing is provided by a RCMP detachment with one sergeant, a constable, and a First Nations special constable.

Other community social services include a YTG Health and Social Services social worker, a Yukon Housing Corporation part-time office, a safe house for women and children, and a daycare centre. The Yukon Family Services Association provides itinerant services out of Whitehorse. Probation services are also provided from Whitehorse.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation offers social services to its members, including counseling, social assistance, adult care, and homecare. Native courtworker services are administered through the Northern Tutchone Council in Pelly Crossing.

Municipal services are provided by the Carmacks municipal government and by the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation.

Fire and ambulance services are provided by a volunteer service. There are two water tanks, one in town and one across the river in the First Nation settlement.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies electric power by transmission line from the Whitehorse dam. There is a local auxiliary diesel generator.

Post office service and mail pick-up is available three times a week. Public local dial-up Internet access is also offered in the community.

Banking services are available twice a week.

Public library services are available through the Carmacks Branch Library.

Road access to Whitehorse and Dawson City is by the paved Klondike Highway. Secondary road access is the Robert Campbell Highway, which goes to Faro and Ross River. Distance to Whitehorse is 175 kilometres, generally a drive of two and a half hours.

Territorial Agent services are provided through the Yukon Housing office in Carmacks. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

Forestry and land use services are provided through the local Northern Affairs branch and the Little Salmon/ Carmacks First Nation administration office.

The community has a small airstrip located approximately 12 kilometres north of

its boundaries on the Robert Campbell Highway. The airstrip, however, is only capable of handling small fixed-wing and helicopter traffic. There is a separate helicopter pad located on the outskirts of town, and two community-based companies offer passenger and freight services. Floatplane traffic is accommodated on three lakes surrounding the community, and at a dock on the Yukon River across from the RCMP detachment. Formalized service for this traffic is not available.

Carmacks has one B & B business and a hotel/restaurant/general store complex that offer year-round services. Services at the hotel complex include accommodation, restaurant, laundromat, bar and off-sales, general store with grocery/bakery/limited hardware/video rental departments, and a gas bar. For those who enjoy a more rustic setting, there is a campground on the bank of the Yukon River, open during the summer. The town also has a full-service gas station that supplies diesel, propane, and mechanical services year-round. Several Whitehorse-based companies offer heating oil delivery service to the community.

Trucking and heavy equipment services are available through the First Nation economic development corporation and several private companies.

Services for Business

Top

Public access to fax and photocopying services may be obtained year-round through the town municipal office and the local Yukon College campus. The hotel complex also offers these services to its customers.

Internet and email access are available through the local library or the Yukon College campus. The college has full-time dedicated access, while the library offers dial-up access only.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation administration office, Yukon College, and the library all offer space and rooms year-round for small or medium-sized meetings. The college campus provides computers and audio conferencing access as well. The municipal Community Hall and the First Nation Heritage Hall both have the capacity to host large functions on a year-round basis.

The completion of a new multi-purpose recreational complex, by winter of the year 2000, will increase meeting space within the community as well as the community's ability to host large-scale sports events.

Cellular phone access is currently unavailable in the Yukon outside of Whitehorse.

Cost of Living

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Although Carmacks is located relatively close to Whitehorse and on a major highway, prices in all categories are higher than equivalent prices in Whitehorse. On average, it costs almost 9 percent more to live in Carmacks than in Whitehorse.

In 1996, according to the Census, there were 165 occupied dwellings in Carmacks. The average value was $88,700 for a two-to-three-bedroom house. Rental housing cost, on average, $543 a month in 1996. The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports that the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation administers 99 houses for First Nations people.

Living in the Community

Carmacks is a very diverse community. For the most part, its residents enjoy the rural wilderness lifestyle and all that it has to offer. Hunting, fishing, trapping, berry-picking, hiking, snowmobiling, and the "great outdoors" are more than just pastimes. They are a way of life.

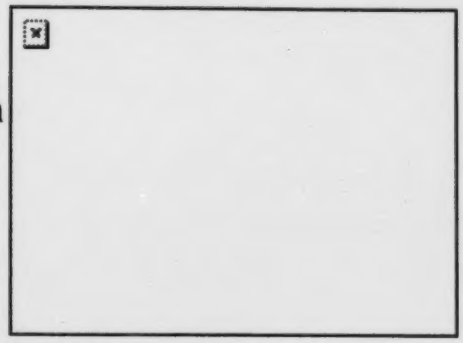
The Carmacks municipal government employs a full-time recreation director to provide a wide variety of recreational activities for youth, as well as to coordinate with other local committees and organizations to host numerous community and family gatherings.

The community has a heated swimming pool for summer use, a multi-purpose outdoor skateboard/rollerblade/ice rink, golf course, hiking trails, three-lane curling rink, cross-country ski and snowmobile trails, historical sites and buildings, archeological sites, and First Nation interpretive centre and traditional craft shop.

The completion of the new recreational complex will greatly enhance community living, particularly during the winter months.

Climate

Top



Carmacks is located at the southern edge of the central Yukon region that tends to experience extremes in temperature. Specific climate information for Carmacks is not available. Because of the Yukon's mountainous terrain, weather varies widely in the Territory, even between communities located relatively near each other. Nevertheless, climate information for Faro, 180 kilometres to the east on the Robert Campbell Highway, is probably the best available indicator of the Carmacks climate.

In 1997, Faro's average January temperature was minus 25.5 degrees Celsius, while the average temperature in July was plus 16 C. Since these averages include both daytime and night-time temperatures, the daytime temperatures are generally a good deal higher. The records in 1997 were a low of minus 49 C and a high of plus 27 C. Precipitation in Faro in 1997 was 267.1 millimetres, of which 202.6 millimetres fell as rain and 100.8 centimetres fell as snow.

More Information

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The students of Tantalus School have placed information about Carmacks on the Internet at http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/tantalus/index.html

The Village of Carmacks municipal government can be reached at Box 113, Carmacks YT, Y0B 1C0, Phone: (867) 863-6271, Fax: (867) 863-6606.

For information about the Carmacks Campus of Yukon College, check http://ayamdigut.yukoncollege.yk.ca/ campuses/carmacks.html

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

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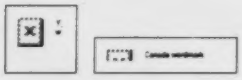

The Community of Dawson City

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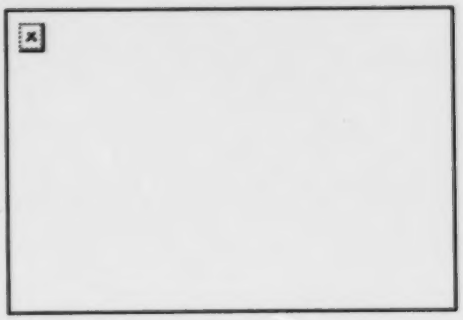

A century ago, Dawson City was a gold rush boomtown. Today the community of Dawson City is still a gold mining centre. However, the main economic activity is tourism, based on the community's colourful past and historical importance. Dawson is located about 536 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse, at the end of the Klondike Highway.

The town of Dawson City lies within the traditional lands of the Han people, the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation. The Han used the site where the town now stands, at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers, as a seasonal fishing camp.

The discovery of gold in the Klondike valley in 1896 led to the establishment of a tiny community where the Klondike flows into the Yukon. By the summer of 1898 Dawson City was the largest city in Canada west of Winnipeg, with a population of 40,000 in the immediate area. Within months, Dawson boasted telephones, running water, steam heat, steamboat services, and a wide range of elaborate hotels, theatres, and dance halls.

A year later the Gold Rush was over and 8,000 people left town in a single summer. By 1902 Dawson City's population had dropped to 5,000, declining further in the early part of this century.

In the early 1960s Dawson City was declared a National Historic Site. Preservation of buildings and historic areas, an assortment of activities related to the Klondike Gold Rush, and other tourism initiatives, draw some 60,000 visitors each year.

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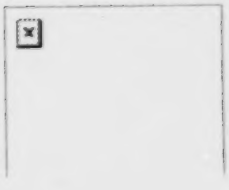
People



Dawson City's 1998 population averaged 2,057, a bit below the previous year's average of 2,132. In general, however, the community has grown through the 1990s, with a population increase of almost 300, or 17 percent, from 1991.

Historically, Dawson City has always experienced major movements of people, both into and out of the area. The scale of movement now is nothing like the migrations of the town's early days. Still, Dawson City has more movers among the local population than do most other Yukon communities. In 1996, the Census reported that 71 percent of the overall Yukon population had lived in the same community five years earlier. In Dawson City, however, the proportion was only 64 percent.

Dawson City also has a higher percentage of new arrivals from outside the Territory. Twenty-four percent of the town's population had moved to the community from outside the Yukon during the period from 1991 to 1996, either from other provinces or from outside Canada. This compares with 22 percent for the Yukon as a whole. The remainder of people moving to Dawson City came from elsewhere in the Yukon.

The Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation makes up about 28 percent of the Dawson City community population. This compares with First Nations representation of about 20 percent for the Yukon population as a whole.

Proportionately fewer children and young people live in the community of Dawson City than in the Yukon as a whole. On the other hand, proportionately more community residents fall into the 25-to-44 age group -- 41 percent, compared to 36 percent for the Yukon as a whole. This reflects the movement of working-age people to Dawson City during the 1990s to find employment or to start businesses.

At the end of 1998, 47 percent of Dawson City's population was female, which is lower than the 49-percent average for the Yukon as a whole.

First Nations

The First Nations people of the Dawson City area are known as the Tr'ondek Hwech'in. They were also previously known as the Han. The Han language is an Athapaskan dialect. Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation people moved to the Moosehide reserve, just downriver from Dawson, at the time of the Klondike Gold

Rush. They had previously lived at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike (Tr'ondek) rivers. During the 1950s, the declining population at Moosehide caused the Tr'ondek Hwech'in people to move into Dawson City, where they have become an important and integral part of the community. As of April 1999, the registered population of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation was 614. About 420 people were living off settlement land, some in other communities.

The Tr'ondek Hwech'in relied heavily on the salmon runs of the Yukon River. They also hunted big game and moved to different areas of their land base, according to the seasons. They are closely related to the Athapaskans of Eagle, Tanacross, and Dot Lake in Alaska. Chief Isaac, the chief of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in during the Gold Rush, realized that his people's culture faced great danger due to the influx of newcomers into their territory and the impact of change which they could not escape. With this in mind, Chief Isaac took his people's songs and stories to a potlatch in Mansfield, Alaska, and entrusted the Upper Tanana people there with keeping the songs for the people of Dawson until a time when they were ready to re-learn them and bring them back. The Tr'ondek Hwech'in people are currently actively involved in learning their songs and dances and passing them on to the children. A beautiful building on the shore of the Yukon River in downtown Dawson City serves as a focal point for the people's cultural revival, as does their biannual gathering at the traditional village of Moosehide.

The Tr'ondek Hwech'in signed their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements in 1998, following the structure laid out in the Umbrella Final Agreement but with specific provisions unique to the Tr'ondek Hwech'in and their land base. Their agreement became effective on September 15, 1998.

The Economy

Top

Dawson City's economy is strongly linked to tourism, which has been growing for the past decade both in the Dawson City area and in the Yukon as a whole. Placer mining is also an important element in the area's economy.

With tourism the major source of economic growth, most employment is linked to providing services for tourists. The accommodation and food services sector employs about 18 percent of the workforce in Dawson City, compared to 10

percent on average in the Yukon. A further 10 percent of the workforce is employed in the "other services" sector, which includes recreation, another fast-growing component of the local economy. Other links to tourism activity appear in the 5 percent employed in transportation and utilities and the 12 percent employed in trade.

Since Dawson City is one of the Yukon's larger communities, government services (22 percent), educational services (7 percent), and health services (5 percent) are also significant employers. These proportions are similar to employment shares for these industry sectors in the Yukon as a whole.

Mining employed about 10 percent of the Dawson City workforce in the 1996 Census, higher than the 6-percent share reported across the Yukon that year. The Dawson area is famous for its placer gold. Calculating accurate placer gold production is notoriously difficult, since the system of reporting is haphazard and some of the gold leaks into the cash economy. The measured output of 116,383 crude ounces of gold in 1997 declined to 90,288 ounces in 1998, indicating a sizeable reduction in placer mining in the past couple of years. The numbers and proportion of people employed chiefly in placer mining will therefore be somewhat lower now than in 1996. However, some people work in other sectors for most of the year and in gold placer mining during the summer.

Agriculture provides a small share of employment (1 percent), close to the overall Yukon pattern. A further 1 percent of people listed fishing and trapping as their main sector of employment. As with mining, the number of people involved in trapping varies from year to year. Some work at trapping part-time to augment income from other sources.

Construction activity is also variable, but provides about 5 percent of employment. Some people find employment in communications and in business services. Other industry sectors, such as forestry, manufacturing, and finance, are too small a part of the Dawson City economy to be measured by Statistics Canada.

Chief Isaac Incorporated controls all Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation business and has established local businesses to employ First Nations people. Fisheries, fish processing, and mushroom harvesting for international markets provide some

additional economic activity in the community. Traditional activities also play a role in the economy and lifestyle of First Nations people in the Dawson City area. A significant proportion hunt and fish to supply some of their families' food needs.

Work

Top

In the 1996 Census, about 87 percent of Dawson City's adult population reported that they were active in the labour market. This is quite a bit higher than the overall Yukon proportion of 81 percent. Reported unemployment, at 12 percent, was slightly higher than the 1996 Yukon average of 11 percent. The general Yukon pattern is of slightly lower unemployment rates for women than men. However, women in Dawson City in 1996 reported a similar unemployment rate to men -- 12 percent, compared to the Yukon-wide rate of 10 percent for women.

Young people are also more likely to be active in the labour market in Dawson City than in the Yukon as a whole. In 1996, about 78 percent of the 15-to-24 age group in Dawson City reported that they were in the labour market, compared to 70 percent across the Yukon. However, unemployment is also higher for Dawson City young people. This age group had an unemployment rate of 21 percent in Dawson City, compared to a Yukon average of 17 percent. High unemployment among young people is a major concern for the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation. They report even higher unemployment among their people and are concerned that much of the available work is seasonal or short-term.

On average in 1998, 172 individuals in Dawson City claimed employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). The number of people claiming employment insurance has averaged close to 200 for much of the 1990s.

Relatively little work in Dawson City is full-time and full year, reflecting the importance of seasonal work in both tourism and placer mining. The 1996 Census reported that people working full-time, full year in Dawson City accounted for only 29 percent of all workers, far short of the 44 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

Self-employment, at 16 percent of all employment, is also significantly higher in Dawson City. In the Yukon as a whole, self-employment accounts for 13 percent of

all work.

Despite the much lower proportion of people working on a full-time, full year basis in Dawson City, average employment income for all workers is about 84 percent of the Yukon average. That average was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. Working longer hours in the summer likely makes up, to some degree, for lack of work at other times. For those working on a full-time, full year basis, earnings in Dawson City are about 94 percent of the average full-time, full year Yukon earnings which were estimated at about $44,300 in 1998.

Work in Dawson City leans strongly toward occupations involved in tourism. At the time of the 1996 Census, about 32 percent of total employment in the community was in sales and service occupations, such as cooks, food service fields, retail sales, and cashiers. This compares with a 25-percent share for these occupational fields in the Yukon as a whole. The proportion of the workforce in sales and service fields will be even higher now than in 1996. Management occupations in Dawson City, at 11 percent of total employment, are close to the overall Yukon share. This reflects the importance of self-employment in the community.

Dawson City is a large community with a wide range of health, education, government and business services. Consequently, some people work in occupations such as teachers, nurses, social workers, and administration. However, the proportion of people working in these occupations is somewhat lower than for the Yukon as a whole.

The importance of mining and related trades work is reflected in the slightly higher shares of employment in these fields in Dawson City than in the Yukon as a whole.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census indicates that 36 percent of people in Dawson aged 15 years or older have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. About 25 percent said they had taken some university-level education. Of the latter group, about half, or 12 percent of the population over 15 years of age, had completed at least a bachelor-level degree. About 26 percent of the 15-plus population said their highest level of education was some secondary school. Seven percent reported completion of Grade 9 or less.

Half of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school or taking

some education during 1996, somewhat lower than the Yukon average.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Dawson City is already a major tourism centre, world-famous for its connection with the Klondike Gold Rush. The town is a national heritage area with a significant array of historical attractions. With further growth in Yukon-wide tourism activities and increased offshore interest in Yukon wilderness, more people are expected to be drawn to the Yukon for longer stays. This will add to the tourism potential of the Dawson City area.

Developing adventure tourism and winter activities will be important steps toward increasing future tourism. So will providing quality services for older, more sophisticated tourists. The new territorial park at Tombstone Mountain, which will be created under the terms of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in land claims agreement, will offer an additional wilderness tourism attraction. Located about 80 kilometres northeast of Dawson on the Dempster Highway, Tombstone Mountain is a rugged and scenic area offering high-quality recreational opportunities in an accessible location.

The newly-formed Dawson City Arts Society is working towards establishment of an arts school that will attract national and international students. Programming will include wilderness arts tours. The society plans to offer part-time programs in 1999/2000 and full-time offerings by the year 2001.

Mining is still a major influence on the economic health of the area. Gold placer mining, which has provided significant employment and income in the past, has weakened in recent years. Placer mining is hard on equipment, and many small operators will not be able to keep operating if gold prices continue to decline. However, gold prices below US $ 270 are generally considered unsustainable, since demand cannot be met by new mine production. Unless central bank sales increase, the price of gold could recover, permitting many small placer operations to start up again.

The most northerly North American heap-leach gold mine is the Brewery Creek operation, near Dawson. In 1999, it is expected to produce 75,000 ounces, a little less than the total declared placer gold production of about 90,000 ounces. The success of heap-leach mining at Brewery Creek is important to the Yukon. It proves that the method works in the Yukon climate and that the acid solution can be prevented from contaminating ground surrounding the leach pads during spring

breakup. The heap-leach method is relatively cheap, permits the mining of low-grade ore, and lends itself to large-scale mining. The viability of this method might be the determining economic factor in whether many future gold mines go into production.

Apart from Rusty Springs, a lead-zinc prospect, and Monster, primarily a copper prospect, gold still offers the primary mining potential of this area. Of particular interest is the Tintina Trench, in which the world-class Pogo discovery was found in Alaska. This geological formation appears to curve in a southeasterly arc through the Yukon to British Columbia. The Brik prospect, west of Dawson City, is believed to be part of this geological feature, and there is some optimism that it will prove successful.

The economic development activity of the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation is a significant factor in Dawson City's future prospects. Building on its current base, Chief Isaac Incorporated has plans to develop other natural products that can be sold to international markets. In addition, the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation and Viceroy Minerals, which operates the Brewery Creek mine, have an agreement that will provide the First Nation with one million dollars over several years and employ machine operators trained under the agreement's provisions.

Tourism development, as a source of job growth in Dawson City, will increasingly require workers who have very competitive skills. Communication and language skills are important, as is expertise in operating businesses, especially small businesses. The use of Internet communications to reach out to tourists is already important. Providing enhanced levels of services, especially to attract older people with high incomes, will be key to expansion.

Community Services

Top

Education from elementary to post-secondary is available in Dawson City. Kindergarten to Grade 12 is available at Robert Service School. Like all Yukon schools, the core curriculum (80%) follows the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, and students are eligible to write B.C. departmental exams.

The Dawson City Campus of Yukon College was given its First Nation name of Tr'odek Hatr'unohtan Zho (Klondike School House) in 1990. It works closely with the First Nation and offers courses such as employment preparation, mine training, early childhood development, office administration, and tourism.

Health care is provided by the Community Health Centre, Monday to Friday. The centre also provides after-hours emergency service and ambulance dispatch. Two doctors and one dentist have practices in Dawson City.

Policing is provided by a RCMP detachment of one sergeant and four constables.

Other community social services include the Yukon Family Services Association, the Housing Corporation, a YTG Health and Social Services social worker, a probation officer, and the Dawson City Women's Shelter, which provides 24-hour-a-day shelter.

The Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation offers social services to its members, including counseling, court assistance and support through the Native courtworker services, social assistance, adult care, and homemaker care. There is a Community Education Liaison Coordinator.

Klondike Outreach is a community-based Employment Resource Centre providing Human Resources Development Canada services, including labour market information, for the Dawson City area. Fire and ambulance services are provided by a volunteer service, 25 strong, with members trained in first aid and CPR. This service operates within town limits.

The Yukon Energy Corporation supplies electric power from a diesel generating plant located in Dawson City.

The town's piped water supply is available to most residents. Outlying homes use private wells. Sewage is micro-screened and discharged into the Yukon River, while garbage is disposed of in a dump.

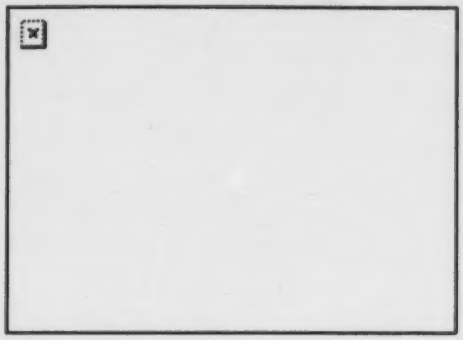
Territorial Agent services are provided through the Yukon Liquor Corporation facilities in Dawson City. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

Post office service includes mail trucked or flown in five times a week. There is also public local dial-up Internet access.

Full library services are available through the Dawson City Community Library both winter and summer, including Internet access for the public.

Banking services are available in Dawson City through a CIBC branch.

The community's airport is located about 16 kilometres outside Dawson City. Customs service is available there. There is regular air service from Whitehorse and Fairbanks, Alaska. Road access is by the Klondike Highway (to Whitehorse), Dempster Highway (to Inuvik, NWT), and Top of the World Highway (summer only, to Tok, Alaska). Whitehorse is 536 kilometres away or six and a half hours' driving time.



Many community services are designed to cater to a transient population because of the heavy tourist traffic, much of it in RVs or by car. The community has a range of commercial campgrounds, hotels and motels, and entertainment travel suppliers. Of note are the Dawson City Museum, the Klondike National Historic Sites, and Diamond Tooth Gertie's Gambling Hall -- the only casino in the Yukon.

Two grocery stores, three video and convenience stores, three clothing stores, two beauty shops, four RV parks, four gas stations, several gift shops, two hardware stores, a Sears outlet, a drugstore, a laundromat, several restaurants, an office supplies store, a bookstore, and a donut shop serve both locals and visitors.

Many of the industrial firms are located at the Callison industrial subdivision on the Klondike Highway five kilometres south of Dawson. These services include tire repair, propane sales, welding and machine shops, heavy equipment repair and rental, a lumber mill, and freight and trucking companies.

During the summer, access across the Yukon River to the Top of the World Highway is by a free ferry service provided by YTG. A public campground, a golf course, and a residential subdivision are located across the river. During the winter, vehicles cross the river on an ice bridge which is also maintained by YTG.

Services for Business

Top

Although many shops, hotels, and restaurants are open only during the busy tourist season, there are a number that remain open year round. Two of the larger hotels, both with dining rooms, are open all year. Two other hotels, a B & B establishment, a coffee shop that serves light meals, a pizzeria, and the donut shop also operate year-round.

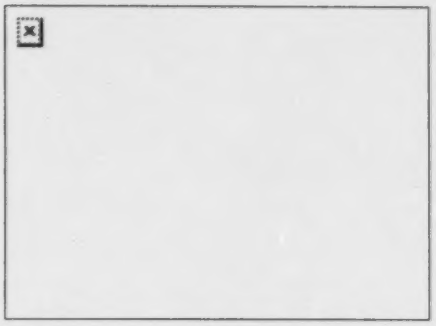
Aurora Accounting and Sunshine Bookkeeping provide word-processing, accounting, photocopying, and fax services. Fax and photocopying are also available at one of the video stores. Harper Street Publishing offers Internet and email during the summer months only. The community has no cell phone access.

Dawson City Courier and Taxi runs a taxi service and a daily bus and small freight service to and from Whitehorse.

Cost of Living

Top

The cost of living in Dawson City reflects the community's location, well off the Alaska Highway, which is the main transportation route to and through the Yukon. Prices for most goods and services are substantially higher than in Whitehorse. In general, living in Dawson City is more than 13 percent more expensive than living in Whitehorse.



In 1996, according to the Census, Dawson City contained 490 occupied dwellings, of which 225 were owner-occupied. The average value was $129,800 for a two-to-three-bedroom house. Rental housing cost, on average, $600 a month in 1996. The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports that there are 84 houses managed by the First Nation. Because Dawson City attracts many job seekers in the summer, housing is typically very hard to obtain in the summer months. In recent years, a campsite has been set up across the Yukon River from the community to provide space for temporary summer residents.

Living in the Community

Top

For a small community, Dawson City boasts a large number of artists and musicians. This fact is reflected in the regular talent shows, poetry readings, plays and art displays, as well as in the annual Dawson City Music Festival and the Klondike Jamboree. The writer-in-residence program brings accomplished authors to the Berton house two or three times a year for extended periods of time. During the tourist season, both local residents and tourists attend dramatic presentations at the museum, Robert Service cabin, Palace Grande Theatre, and Diamond Tooth Gertie's.

Hiking, fishing, golfing, tennis, and baseball are common summer activities. They

are supplemented by a full range of recreational activities provided by the City of Dawson's recreation department. The location of the town, at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers, invites canoeing, rafting, and boating. There are many hiking trails close to town and in the nearby goldfields with wonderful views of the town and surrounding area. These include the popular Crocus Bluff, Moosehide, and Ridge Road trails.

In the winter people are involved with curling, hockey, snowmobiling, dog mushing, cross-country and downhill skiing. The Yukon Quest sled dog race runs through Dawson every year, as does the Top of the World Trek, an international snowmobile trip from Tok, Alaska to Dawson City.

Climate

Top

The climate in Dawson City reflects its northern location. In 1997, weather reports showed the average daily temperature in January, based on both daytime and night-time values, was minus 32.5 degrees Celsius. In July the equivalent daily average was plus 16.7 degrees. However, the long days of summer can be very warm. The record high was 30 degrees in 1997, and the record low that winter was minus 52 degrees. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 351.0 millimetres (compared to 234.3 millimetres in 1996). This included 243.0 millimetres of rain and 171.2 centimetres of snow.

More Information

Top

Community and business service information is available at http://www.yukonweb.com/community/dawson/

Dawson City's municipal government can be reached at the City of Dawson, Box 308, Dawson City YT, Y0B 1G0, Phone: (867) 993-7400, Fax: (867) 993-7434.

Details about the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For more information about the First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

Tourist and other local information is provided by the Klondike Visitors Association at http://www.hyperborean-web.com/kva/

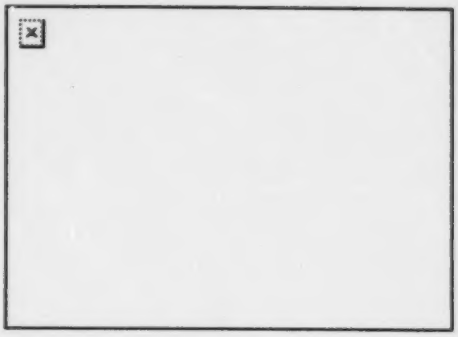
For information about the Dawson City campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

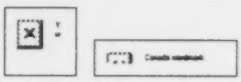


The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

More information can be found at Klondike Outreach Office at http://www.users.yknet.yk.ca/koutreach/index.htm



The Community of Faro

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

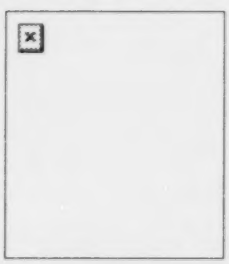
Faro is located in the Pelly River valley in the Anvil Mountains and owes its existence to a major lead-zinc deposit discovered in 1953. The deposit was originally developed under the name of Dynasty Explorations. Dynasty later joined forces with Cyprus Anvil Mining to put the open-pit mine, one of the largest of its type in the world, into production in 1969. The townsite of Faro was still being built at that time.

The town lies 22 kilometres from the mine site and just off the Robert Campbell Highway, 356 kilometres northeast of Whitehorse.

The community depends on the mine for most of its economic base and employment. The mine has had a checkered history of operation and ownership. Currently, in 1999, it has not been producing for two years due to low mineral prices. As a result, Faro has had several trying years of declining population and difficult economic times.

People

Top



The population of Faro has fluctuated wildly over the years, depending on the status of the mine. At the end of 1998, the population of Faro stood at about 650, significantly lower than its 1998 average of 900. By the fall of 1999, the count had dropped to just under 350 residents. The population decline is even more dramatic when compared to 1996 (1,312) and 1997 (1,226). In 1991, with the mine in production, Faro reached a population of over 1,500. On the other hand, the average population dipped to just over 500 in 1994 when the mine last curtailed operation.

Faro is a community of movers. Well below 10 percent of the people living in Faro at the time of the 1996 Census said they had been born in the Yukon. Only 40 percent of the population had lived in the Faro area in 1991. In comparison, 71 percent of people Yukon-wide had lived in their communities five years earlier. When the mine is in operation, most mining jobseekers come to the community

from outside the Territory, or even from outside of Canada. In 1996, close to 60 percent of the Faro population had come from outside the Yukon at some time in the previous five years, compared to 28 percent for the Territory as a whole.

The Census showed a very small representation of First Nations people in the community -- just 6 percent in 1996, compared to the Yukon-wide representation of 20 percent.

Faro's age distribution at the end of 1998 shows about the same proportion of children and youth as in the general Yukon population. However, there are relatively more people in the younger prime-working-age segment, 25 to 44 years of age. Very few people over the age of 65 live in Faro. This is consistent with a mining-town pattern, where prime-working-age people flow into and out of the community in waves over the years. The small proportion of people over 65 also reflects the relative newness of the town itself -- only 30 years old -- and the fact that many people who work in mining towns retire elsewhere.

About 48 percent of the population in Faro is female, very close to the 49-percent female representation in the total Yukon population.

First Nations

The town of Faro is located within the traditional hunting and trapping area of the Kaska Dena people of Ross River. People remember when the present townsite was a prime moose-hunting area. Faro was developed and has operated for the last several decades with little direct involvement by the First Nations people of the region.

The Economy

Top

Faro was created as a community to house workers and provide services to the Cyprus Anvil Mine, and mining remains the base of the community's economy. In 1996, when the Anvil Range mine was still producing, well over 50 percent of the community's workforce was employed in mining.

Other industries provided services to the mine, such as transportation of minerals or delivery of goods.

Faro also had some community services, such as education, health, and government services. Still other service sectors, such as retail trade and accommodation and food services, catered to people who worked at the mine and lived in the community.

The mine is not in operation in late 1999, and the population has declined. Many who lost jobs at the mine moved to look for work elsewhere. Nevertheless, government, education, and health care still employ people in Faro. Commercial activities that provide retail, accommodation, food, and other services to local people have undoubtedly been affected by the suspension of mining and the movement of people out of Faro. However, they are still needed by the people remaining in the area. Tourism is a small component of economic activity in Faro, but supplies some employment.

Work

Top

Faro has certain characteristics typical of a mining town. People come to Faro for work. When there is no work, many move out. In general, participation in the labour market is very high. In 1996, when the mine was in operation, 85 percent of people over 15 years of age were involved in the workforce. This compares with an 81-percent average across the Yukon. At that time, unemployment was significantly lower in Faro (just under 6 percent) than in the Yukon as a whole (11 percent). Of course, unemployment in Faro now is higher than it was in 1996. However, the local impact of the loss of mining jobs has been reduced by the fact that many people left Faro when they no longer had work.

On average during 1998, 190 people were claiming employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance). This is up from 49 in 1995 when the mine was in operation.

Young people in Faro, those in the 15-to-24 age group, are more likely to be in the labour force than youth Yukon-wide because of the appeal mining jobs hold for this

age group. However, with limited education, they are very vulnerable to unemployment. Youth in Faro had an unemployment rate double the average community unemployment rate in 1996. Employment conditions for youth will be even more difficult now, with the mine closed.

When the mine was in operation, a slightly higher proportion of work in Faro was full-time, full year than in the Yukon as whole. Forty-six percent of work was reported as full-time, full year, compared to 44 percent Yukon-wide.

Also typical of a mining town, there is far less self-employment in Faro than in other parts of the Yukon: about 6 percent of Faro's total work activity, compared to the Yukon self-employment rate of 13 percent.

Average employment income in Faro in 1996 was about 6 percent higher than the Yukon average. For those who had full-time, full year work, average earnings were the same as the Yukon average. The decline in mining employment, typically well paid, means that current earnings in Faro have probably slipped a little in comparison to the Yukon's estimated average. Overall average earnings in the Yukon were estimated at $30,000 in 1998. The estimated Yukon average for full-time, full year work was $44,300.

The dominance of the Faro mine in the economy means that, when the mine is producing, a large proportion of residents operate mining equipment, drive trucks, or work in trades. The 1996 occupational distribution of employment reflects the importance of the mine. Some 36 percent of the workforce was employed in construction trades, transport, and other equipment-operating occupations, far higher than the Yukon-wide proportion of 18 percent.

Other Faro residents worked in sales and service occupations -- 22 percent compared to 26 percent at the Yukon level. Proportionately fewer people than the Yukon-wide average worked in such fields as management, finance, administration, health, education, social, or government occupations. However, these service and professional occupations provide the majority of employment, now that the mine is out of production.

Education

Top

In 1996, a majority of people living in Faro reported that they either had secondary school education (38 percent) or had taken some non-university post-secondary or college education or training (35 percent). A further 18 percent reported they had

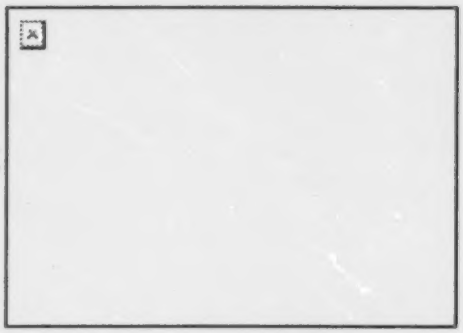
some university education, with 7 percent having completed university degrees.

Close to half of the people aged 15 to 24 years reported that they were attending school. This is a little lower than the pattern for the Yukon as a whole and reflects the attractiveness of work when the mine was in operation.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

The lead-zinc-silver mine at Faro has appeared in numerous guises since 1953. Its troubles typify the problems of mining in the Yukon. The Yukon is a high-cost area. Metal prices have to be high to generate interest in funding production. However, prices have often passed their peak by the time production starts. The lower prices mean the mines are faced with insufficient early returns to pay off capital costs, and they close to await another cycle of increasing mineral prices. Currently Faro is in just such a position. There are still reserves at Faro, and higher metal prices could result in the mine's reopening. However, it is also likely that fewer people will be employed in the mine if it reopens.



Because it had to establish a wide variety of community and recreational facilities to attract workers to the mine, the community of Faro has extremely good services. A good housing stock, along with the high level of community services, should be able to support other developments.

The municipality of Faro is focusing on tourism for possible economic growth, since tourism activity is increasing Yukon-wide. The wilderness surrounding Faro has a wealth of scenery. Faro itself is on the edge of the Yukon Plateau, an area particularly rich in wildlife. The town's ability to offer good community facilities for visitors is helpful. New tourist ventures built on emerging adventure and wilderness activities could be encouraged.

If Faro is to be successful in diversifying its economy with tourism, the town will need workers who can operate small businesses and who have good communication skills.

Community Services

Top

Education from kindergarten to Grade 12 is available at Del Van Gorder School. Post-secondary education is provided through Yukon College's Faro Campus which

opened in 1988. The Faro Campus offers both full-time and part-time programs, ranging from academic upgrading to computer studies, early childhood development, office management, and employment skills.

Health care is provided through the Faro Nursing Station, which is staffed by community nurses who function as nurse practitioners in collaboration with a doctor. The clinic is open Monday to Friday, except on statutory holidays. Emergency care is available 24 hours a day. A doctor based in Faro also provides services to Ross River.

YTG Health and Social Services provides a full range of counseling services in Faro.

There is an RCMP detachment in Faro. Probation services are provided out of Whitehorse.

Territorial Agent services are provided from the Yukon Liquor Corporation facilities in Faro. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

Canada Post has a full-service postal outlet in Faro. Local dial-up Internet access is available in the community.

Faro is served by an agency of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, located in the mall across from the Recreation Centre. The agency is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Fridays from 12 noon to 4 p.m.

Faro's recreation centre has a gymnasium, seasonal swimming pool, seasonal curling rink, squash court, and youth centre. In addition, the community has an indoor ice arena and a community library. Faro has a volunteer fire service, and a volunteer ambulance service.

The Faro airport has a 4,000-foot gravel runway with lights. The airport is staffed seven days a week, provides flight plan filing (through Whitehorse Flight Services), and arrangements can be made for refueling. It is adjacent to Johnson Lake, which is used as a float plane base (6,000 feet).

Road access to Whitehorse is via the Campbell Highway and Klondike Highway. It is 356 kilometres to Whitehorse, a driving time of about four and a half hours. Watson Lake is 423 kilometres away via the Campbell Highway.

The Yukon Energy Corporation supplies hydroelectric power from the Whitehorse dam.

There are two churches in Faro. The Church of the Apostles holds Catholic and Protestant services and is run by a joint board. The Faro Bible Chapel holds services Sunday mornings at 11.

Faro has a grocery store that is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The store also rents home videos and sells fresh pizzas and subs. There is also a catalogue mail order outlet.

There is a small local hardware store with flexible hours.

Faro has a gas station open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. Diesel and propane are also available.

There is a local humane society run by volunteers.

A local gift and tobacco store is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The only local restaurant is located in the hotel. Hours vary.

Faro has one beauty salon, available for family haircuts by appointment.

Services for Business

Top

Faro houses three B & B establishments as well as one hotel with a restaurant.

Photocopying and faxing can be done at the Yukon College Campus, Town of Faro office, or the grocery store.

Internet and email access are available at the Public Library as well as at the Yukon College Campus.

There is no cell phone access in Faro, but one can use a satellite phone.

There is ample housing, office, and business space at this time.

The Town's municipal office is open for business licences and information about

There is an active local tourism association.

Cost of Living

Top

Prices in Faro range from almost 18 percent above comparable prices in Whitehorse to more than 13 percent below Whitehorse prices. Overall, the cost of living in Faro is just over 2 percent higher than the Whitehorse cost of living.

The Census reported 460 occupied private dwellings in Faro in 1996. For owner-occupied housing in Faro, generally with three bedrooms, Census information gave an average value of $46,200 in 1996. Rented accom-modation cost an average of $723 a month in 1996.

Living in the Community

Faro offers opportunities for both summer and winter recreation. A lot of time has been spent creating hiking trails, an arboretum, and many wildlife/scenic viewing stations. Fanin Sheep, which are particular to the region, can be studied from these stations.

Local sports include slo-pitch softball, squash, swimming in the seasonal pool, cross-country skiing, hockey, figure skating, curling, and a kids' athletics club. Faro also has a modified recreational nine-hole golf course. Access to gym and weight room is available at the recreation centre.

Faro is famous for its Sleeping Bag Curling Bonspiel, and for the annual spring festival -- Ice Worm Squirm.

There are active Girl Guides of Canada units for girls aged 5 to 15. Royal Canadian Air Cadets for youth over the age of 12, meet once a week.

Johnson Lake and Fish Eye Lake provide space for outdoor recreation, including swimming, water-skiing, fishing, and boating.

Recreational aircraft flying is popular.

Climate

Top

In 1997, Faro's average January temperature was minus 25.5 degrees Celsius, while the average temperature in July was plus 16 C. Since these averages include both daytime and night-time temperatures, the daytime temperatures are generally a good deal higher. The records hit in 1997 were a low of minus 49 C and a high of plus 27 C. Precipitation in Faro in 1997 was 267.1 millimetres, of which 202.6 millimetres fell as rain and 100.8 centimetres fell as snow.

More Information

Top

Information on Faro is available from the Town of Faro's Internet site at http://www.faro.yk.net/

The municipal government can be reached at Town of Faro, Box 580, Faro YT, Y0B 1K0, Phone: (867) 994-2728, Fax: (867) 994-3154.

For information about the Faro Campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

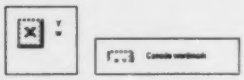
For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html



The Community of Haines Junction

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

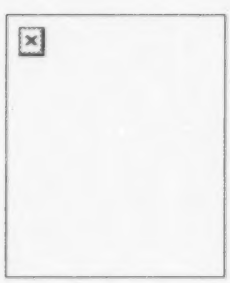
Set against the spectacular backdrop of Canada's highest mountains, Haines Junction is a popular holiday destination for Yukoners as well as tourists. The community is located at the junction of the Alaska Highway and the Haines Road, 158 kilometres west of Whitehorse.

The Haines Junction area was a crossroads long before the highways arrived. It is located on an early trade route used by the Coastal Tlingit and Chilkat peoples. The Southern Tutchone used it as a temporary staging area for trapping, hunting, and fishing. The village itself was established in 1942, during construction of the Alaska Highway. Currently, the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation has its administrative centre at Haines Junction.

Haines Junction is best known as the access point to Kluane National Park, a dramatically beautiful wilderness park, famous for its glaciers, mountains, and wildlife. The park encompasses a portion of the St. Elias Mountains, including Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak.

People

Top



The population of Haines Junction was slightly over 800 in 1998. This is a small decline from the year before, when the population was estimated at 854. In general, the population has changed very little through much of the 1990s.

The 1996 Census indicated that about 70 percent of the population of the Village of Haines Junction had lived there for at least five years. This is close to the pattern for the overall Yukon population. Only 15 percent of the 1996 population had moved to the town in the previous five years from outside of the Yukon, primarily from elsewhere in Canada. This compares with 22 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation (CAFN) is estimated to be about half of the overall community population. Census results for the Village of Haines Junction identify First Nations people at 40 percent of the population. However, this does not take into account the overall community area or CAFN villages outside the incorporated area.

Only 32 percent of the Haines Junction population falls into the 25-to-44 age group, compared to 36 percent Yukon-wide. There are proportionately more people in older age groups. About 24 percent of the population are from 45 to 64 years of age and 7 percent of the population is over 65 years of age. Comparable proportions for the Yukon as a whole are 23 percent and 5 percent. This age distribution reflects lack of opportunity for the working-age population. Some young adults will have left the community to find work in places such as Whitehorse. Others likely work in other places for at least part of the year.

Half of the Haines Junction population is female, just above the Yukon average of 49 percent.

First Nations

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation has its administrative centre at Haines Junction but also operates an office in Whitehorse. Originally, the townsite of Haines Junction was a stopover place for people on the move to other areas. The traditional name for the site is Dakwakada or "high cache." The CAFN's traditional land is the southwestern Yukon and northwestern British Columbia, and its tribal council affiliation is the Southern Tutchone Tribal Council. The CAFN identifies an overall membership of 1,129, making it one of the largest First Nations in the Yukon.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation traditional territory is the home of the Southern Tutchone people of the southern Yukon region. Within its land base there are many villages, such as Champagne, Klukshu, Aishihik, and Hootchi. Southern Tutchone belongs to the Athapaskan language family. Many people in this area have Tlingit ancestry. The Coastal Tlingit people passed through the region for

trade purposes, and the Tlingit village of Klukwan near Haines, Alaska, is close by. The Southern Tutchone lived a nomadic way of life and relied on the land and its resources for survival. Salmon remains one of the rich resources found in this area. Many Southern Tutchone people harvest salmon at the village of Klukshu and at Dalton Post (Sha'washe).

The Southern Tutchone people developed a social system based on the clan system, which was borrowed from the Coastal Tlingit people who traded, partnered, and intermarried with the people of the area. Many of the Champagne and Aishihik people trace their ancestry through various clans originating on the coast. With the presence of a strong moiety and clan system, the potlatch system is also central to the Champagne-Aishihik people's cultural tradition. Language, art, dancing and singing, and traditional bush life are being actively revived by the CAFN members and taught to the children.

The Champagne-Aishihik First Nation was one of the first four First Nations to sign their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements when Land Claims was enacted in 1993. Many of the early leaders who were involved with the process from its 1973 inception were Champagne-Aishihik First Nation members. Among them were Elijah Smith, Harry Allen, Mary Jane Jim, David Joe, and Paul Birckel. Throughout the negotiation process, Champagne-Aishihik First Nation was strongly involved in the Council for Yukon Indians (later the Council of Yukon First Nations). Under their Land Claims Agreement, the Champagne-Aishihik First Nation will have a role in the co-management of their traditional territorial lands and any development proceeding on those lands. As well, special management areas will be established to guide the development and/or management of Kluane National Park, Sha'washe and surrounding area, and joint management of the Tatshenshini River.

The Economy

Top

Haines Junction's economy is linked to the community's location along the Alaska Highway and to its role as access point to Kluane National Park. Kluane is a wilderness park with hiking, skiing, and cycling trails. Vehicle access to the park is limited to Mush Lake and the Alsek valley. Snowmobile access is limited to

The government services sector provides a significant share of work -- about 34 percent of overall employment, compared with 21 percent for this sector across the Yukon. Haines Junction is home to the administrative centre for Kluane National Park, as well as a variety of territorial government services. In addition, Haines Junction is the centre for CAFN administration, which now encompasses administration and provision of a variety of municipal and social services.

Close to 10 percent of the workforce is employed in education services, higher than the Yukon-wide level of 7 percent. In contrast, health services account for about 3 percent of employment in Haines Junction, compared to 7 percent overall in the Yukon.

Tourism-related economic activity is a major part of community employment. The accommodation and food services sector employs about 13 percent of the workforce, compared to a 10-percent share across the Yukon. Transportation is another significant component of the local economy, accounting for 7 percent of employment, slightly above the Yukon average of 6 percent. The "other services" sector, which includes recreation, accounts for 7 percent of employment, matching the Yukon average. Retail trade's 7-percent share of industry employment is below the 11-percent share for the Yukon.

Construction activity provides about 7 percent of employment, close to the 8-percent share for the Yukon as a whole. Other sectors that offer employment in the Haines Junction area include communications, forestry, and manufacturing. Industry sectors like agriculture, mining, finance, and business services are too small a part of the Haines Junction economy to be measurable in the Census.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation has recently started up a forest products company, Dakwakada Forest Products, to produce kiln-dried finished lumber from the locally-harvested logs they produce.

Traditional activities also play a role in the economy and lifestyle of Haines Junction, especially for First Nations people. Fur trapping is practiced on both a full-time and part-time basis, and most First Nation community members exercise their subsistence rights to hunt and fish.

Work

Top

The 1996 Census showed that people in Haines Junction were more likely than the Yukon average to be in the labour market, either employed or looking for work. The proportion of unemployed people looking for work was also higher than average in Haines Junction. These patterns show that Haines Junction is a community with diverse opportunities that encourage participation in the formal labour market, but also that not all the people who want work are able to find it.

The difficulty in finding work is particularly acute for young people aged 15 to 24. The unemployment rate for this age group in Haines Junction was 44 percent in 1996, well above the Yukon's average youth unemployment rate of 17 percent.

The pattern of high unemployment for community residents is borne out by employment insurance numbers. In 1998, an average of 62 individuals claimed employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). The number of people claiming income from employment insurance has averaged over 60 throughout the second half of the 1990s.

In the Haines Junction area, work is less likely to be full-time, full year than the Yukon average. The 1996 Census reported that 38 percent of all workers were working full-time, full year, compared with 44 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

In 1996, about 13 percent of those working in the Village of Haines Junction reported that they were mainly self-employed. This is the same proportion as in the overall Yukon workforce.

The average employment income for all workers in Haines Junction is about 83 percent of the Yukon average which was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those working on a full-time, full year basis, the gap is a little less -- 87 percent of the average full-time, full year Yukon earnings which were estimated at about $44,300 in 1998.

The mix of occupational groups in Haines Junction is very close to the overall Yukon mix. The largest occupational field is sales and service, reflecting the importance of tourism in the local economy. In addition, Kluane National Park provides opportunities for science occupations. Other work, which emphasizes management and administration, is usually related to government activities, including First Nations, other governments, and park administration.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census indicates that 33 percent of the Haines Junction population aged 15 years or older have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. A further 32 percent of the same age group said that their highest level of education was some secondary school, and 8 percent reported completing Grade 9 or less.

About 21 percent had taken some university-level education. Of this group, about half -- or 10 percent of the population over 15 years of age -- had completed a university degree.

Sixty percent of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school or taking some education during 1996, somewhat higher than the Yukon average.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Haines Junction is located in an area with major potential for further tourism development. Nearby Kluane National Park has been designated a World Heritage Site. It offers the kind of wilderness tourism opportunities, especially ecotourism, that are growing in popularity among offshore tourists. While the park itself is a wilderness area, the administrative centre in Haines Junction has some interpretation services. Additional activities that encourage a wider range of tourists to use the park and its surrounding area would provide further employment. Adventure tourism, the fastest growing tourism activity in Haines Junction, is also important to future tourism work.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation is already active in the tourism industry. It sits as a full partner on the Kluane National Park Management Board and, through the CAFN's Land Claims Agreement, is co-manager of natural and cultural resources in the First Nation's traditional territory. The CAFN is promoting tourism development as a major element of its economic development policy. Its plans

include providing accommodation and transportation services, as well as developing commercial products related to cultural interests.

The CAFN Dakwakada Forest Products Company is expected eventually to provide employment for up to 15 people. The intent is to produce finished lumber for domestic and foreign markets.

The Division Mountain Coal Property provides some additional development interest in the Haines Junction area. The property is in the early development stage, and is not expected to provide employment opportunities in the next few years. Its long-term goal is to produce coal for export and for local power generation. However, Rocky Mountain coal mines with export contracts are currently experiencing reduced selling prices and cutbacks on shipments. As a result, many are becoming uneconomic. Given this situation, a mine like Division Mountain will be hard to place into production. Even with the prospect of local power generation as a market, a contracted export market is almost a prerequisite for production. An environmental assessment is necessary before production, and this may turn out to be a valuable delay, moving plans further ahead in time.

With the emphasis on tourism development in Haines Junction, tourism occupations can be expected to grow. These include operating hotels, motels, campgrounds, restaurants, and outfitting and guiding businesses. There is some need for special skills, such as food preparation, but most workers will need strong communications skills and the knowledge required to run small businesses.

Community Services

Top

St. Elias Community School offers kindergarten to Grade 12. Communities further north on the Alaska Highway also send students to Haines Junction for Grades 10-12. Some students attend high school in Whitehorse.

The Yukon College campus offers full-time academic upgrading programs and delivers a variety of continuing education courses. The campus's location near the St. Elias Mountains provides opportunities for such courses as avalanche training, wilderness guiding, and wilderness survival. Partnership with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation has resulted in development of an Adventure Tourism Guide Training program.

Haines Junction is served by a local community health centre, which offers two open clinics a day, Monday to Friday, and community health service every

weekday afternoon. Emergencies are seen at any time. The community health nurse also covers Champagne and Canyon Creek. Haines Junction also has a locally-based social worker.

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation's social services program provides a number of services to its members in Haines Junction, Champagne, and Canyon Creek. These include counseling, court assistance, social assistance, adult and homemaker care, and community health care. The CAFN and the Justice Department collaborate in holding a Circle Court in Haines Junction. The CAFN has been delegated authority for care of First Nations children by the Yukon government and provides these services.

The RCMP operates a detachment in Haines Junction of one corporal and two constables (including a designated First Nations position), along with a part-time clerk. Native courtworker and probation services are provided from Whitehorse. Alternative justice systems are provided by the local Haines Junction Community Justice Committee.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies hydroelectric power from Aishihik Lake, with diesel generator back-up.

Haines Junction has a volunteer fire department, and staff are trained in first aid and CPR. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation also has fire halls and equipment located at Champagne and Canyon Creek.

Haines Junction village has a piped water supply that is also available to some parts of the First Nations villages. Other areas use trucked-in, chlorinated well water.

Haines Junction is approximately 158 kilometres west of Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway, at its junction with the Haines Highway. Both highways are substantial all-weather roads, connecting the Yukon with Alaska in two directions. The community's geographic location has resulted in the development of a highway maintenance centre, gas stations, and automotive repair services.

Territorial Agent services are provided through the Yukon Liquor Corporation facilities in Haines Junction. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

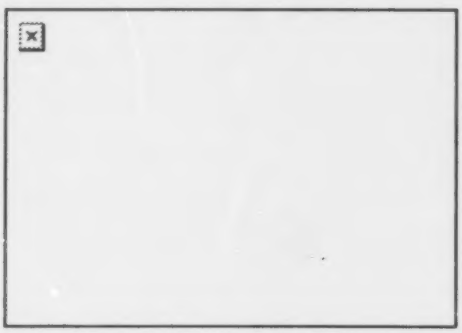
Mail is trucked in and out of the Haines Junction postal outlet five times a week. Local dial-up Internet access is available in the community.

Banking services are available five afternoons a week.

Community facilities include an arena, swimming pool, community library with public Internet access, youth centre, and community halls at Haines Junction, Klukshu, and Champagne.

Six commercial RV sites provide electricity and water hook-ups for RVs and campers. Two sites provide tenting space. Yukon Government and Kluane National Park run campgrounds in the area as well. Three laundromats are available to travelers.

Automotive gas and diesel can be obtained at nine outlets. Two of the outlets also dispense propane. A full range of mechanical services is available, including towing.



There are six year-round and three seasonal motels, hotels, and lodges. Six restaurants and a bakery/deli provide a full range of cuisine from fast food take-out to fine gourmet dining. The five current B & B locations provide unique accommodation opportunities, with several other locations opening in the near future.

The General Store supplies fresh produce, groceries, and hardware. Other retail outlets and services include a women's clothing store, ATV and snowmobile sales, hair and tanning salons, a bakery and deli, and an art gallery, with another one soon to open. Gold jewelry and local First Nations crafts are sold through several home businesses.

Several ecotourism businesses provide a full range of experiences, including rafting, canoeing, horseback riding, fishing, llama treks, biking and hiking, as well as canoe and bicycle rentals. Flight services are available by helicopter or fixed wing aircraft.

Services for Business

Top

The new Convention Centre can be rented from the Village of Haines Junction. This facility includes a fully-equipped theatre with retractable tiered seating for 250. Kitchen facilities and several smaller rooms can be rented individually or as a

unit. Champagne-Aishihik First Nation, and the Haines Junction Community Campus of Yukon College also rent out space.

Internet, email, photocopying, and computer access are available at the public library and Haines Junction Community Campus. Kluane Park Inn provides access to a fax machine. Currently cell phone service is not available.

Heavy equipment rentals, carpentry, electrical, and plumbing contractors are obtainable within the community.

Other accessible services are: secretarial services, tax preparation and bookkeeping, courier and bus service to and from Whitehorse, an airport with a year-round maintained gravel runway and fuel service for air traffic, and web-page design and computer graphics.

Cost of Living

Top

The cost of living in Haines Junction, on average, is only about 3% higher than the cost of living in Whitehorse. However, that average masks sharp differences in particular areas. Meat and bread and cereal cost substantially less, on average, than they do in Whitehorse, while household operations and health and personal care cost substantially more.

The 1996 Census provided information on housing in the Village of Haines Junction. At that time there were 200 occupied dwellings, of which 95 were occupied by the owners. The average cost was $114,500 for a house with two to three bedrooms. Rental housing cost an average of $560 a month in 1996. The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports 104 houses are administered by the CAFN.

Living in the Community

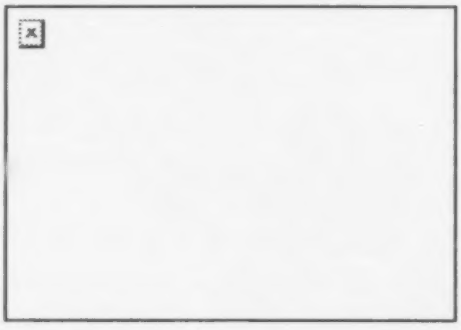
Top

The Haines Junction area offers much to all ages, interests, and capabilities. It is an eclectic mix of resources, philosophies, and nationalities. Kluane National Park and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation provide rich scientific, educational, and cultural elements. Also, an influx of Swiss and German immigrants has added another dimension to the economy and cultural diversity.

Multicultural learning and teaching is an integral part of life in Haines Junction. Languages spoken here include English, Southern Tutchone, French, Chinese, German, Swiss, and Spanish. Language courses, including ESL, are sometimes offered at Haines Junction Campus of Yukon College. The St. Elias Community School curriculum includes French and First Nation languages, and various cultural studies and events.

Kluane National Park also offers educational programs for students and the public. The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation often organizes such cultural events as potlatches, and the Dakwakada Dancers perform at public gatherings. The Society for Education and Culture hosts academic and "think-tank" symposia on a variety of cultural topics.

Nestled at the base of Canada's highest mountains, Haines Junction offers a picturesque setting for artistic pursuits and an outdoor lifestyle. Clean air and water, acreage dwelling at Mackintosh, Pine Lake, and Willow Acres, and outdoor events encourage this.



People have fun in Haines Junction while keeping healthy by exercise. A spacious hockey arena (and active hockey association), swimming pool, curling rink, and school gym complete with a climbing wall and fitness centre, keep the townspeople busy. Annual events include several Poker Runs (snowmachine and four-wheeler), Silver Sled Dog Musher Race, Trail of '42 Road Race, Kluane-Chilkat Bike Relay, Terry Fox Run, Regatta, and several hockey tournaments and curling bonspiels.

More recreation is provided by the annual Alsek Music Festival, the 1016 Band, Village Bakery coffee houses and barbecues, Threadbearers Sewing and Quilting group, Yukon Trail Riding, bingo, snowboarding, skiing, walking groomed wooded trails, Internet surfing, fishing, hunting, boating, berry picking, taverns with music events, and watching videos. Main family events are Halloween bonfire and fireworks and the school Christmas Concert.

And life in Haines Junction is cussed, discussed, advertised, and recorded in the local newsletter, the *St. Elias Echo*.

Climate

Top

The climate in Haines Junction reflects its location in the southwest Yukon. In 1997, weather reports showed the average daily temperature in January was minus 19.3 degrees Celsius, while in July the daily average was plus 13.3 degrees C. The daily averages cover a full 24-hour day, so daytime highs are substantially higher, especially in summer. The record high is 27 degrees C, and the record low is minus 45 degrees C. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 416 millimetres (compared to 304.8 millimetres in 1996). This included 227.2 millimetres of rain and 188.8 centimetres of snow.

More Information

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The Haines Junction municipal government can be reached at Village of Haines Junction, Box 5339, Haines Junction YT, Y0B 1L0, Phone: (867) 634-7100/01, Fax: (867) 634-2008.

For information on Haines Junction village see http://www.yukonweb.com/community/kluane/hj.html

The Champagne and Aishihik First Nation provides more information at http://www.cafn.yk.net/

Details about the Champagne and Aishihik First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For more information about the First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For information about the Haines Junction campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/ campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the*

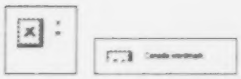
Environment Report at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html



The Community of Mayo

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

There was a time when the mines around Mayo drove the Yukon economy. Today the economic balance has shifted to other parts of the Territory, but the community of Mayo still serves as distribution and service centre for the surrounding area. Mayo is located at the confluence of the Mayo and Stewart rivers in the centre of the Yukon, about 400 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse. It lies within the traditional territory of the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation.

Mayo was originally established as a river port. Later it became the service centre for significant mining activity in the area. Silver, zinc, and lead ores were loaded on steamboats at Mayo to be shipped by sternwheeler to Whitehorse. In the 1950s, a road was built, linking Mayo with Whitehorse. Now Mayo is on the Silver Trail, a road beginning at Stewart Crossing on the Klondike Highway and leading to the mining town of Elsa and Keno.

Scenery and history make Mayo a significant tourist destination. The community is a convenient base for wilderness tourism, canoeing, hiking, big game hunting and fly-in fishing facilities.

People

Top

The average population of the community of Mayo in 1998 was 484, slightly lower than the previous couple of years when the population topped 500. Mayo's population grew slightly at the start of the 1990s, but has shown little change in recent years.

The people of the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation, who live in and around Mayo, make up 60 to 70 percent of the community population, compared to First Nations representation of 20 percent for the Yukon overall.

Mayo has a settled population. The 1996 Census reported that well over 80 percent of the people living in Mayo had also lived there in 1991. Fewer than 10 percent of the population had moved to Mayo from outside the Yukon in the five years prior

to 1996, compared to 22 percent of the overall Yukon population.

There are proportionately more children in the community of Mayo than in the overall Yukon population. There are also slightly more people over 65 years of age, compared to the Yukon as a whole. On the other hand, Mayo's population includes fewer people, proportionately, in the 45-to-64 age group, reflecting some earlier movement out of the area by people looking for work elsewhere.

At the end of 1998, 51 percent of Mayo's population was female, a little higher than the 49 percent proportion for the Yukon as a whole.

First Nations

Historically, the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun people have lived and trapped throughout the area surrounding Mayo. The Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation is affiliated with the Northern Tutchone Council. The registered population of the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation was 435 as of April 1999. A significant number of the First Nation's members live in the Mayo area, while some live in other communities.

The Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun people are culturally affiliated with the Northern Tutchone people of the Selkirk First Nation and the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. Northern Tutchone is a member of the Athapaskan language family. As well, some members of the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun trace their ancestry to the Gwitchin people to the north and MacKenzie people to the east. Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun means "big river people."

Since earliest times, the people lived on the land, using the rich supply of game animals, fish, birds, and vegetation in the area. Their lifestyle required that they travel throughout their traditional territory at various times of the year. The people of the area followed a traditional moiety system of Crow and Wolf. The oral history of the Na-cho Ny'a'k Dun people reveals early contacts and trade relationships with explorers and traders coming to the area. The First Nation readily adapted to the dramatic changes occurring over the last several decades, as mining interests and settlement expanded in the area and transportation routes were built. Many of the men found employment in the mines and in road maintenance.

The Na-cho Ny'a'k Dun was one of the first four First Nations to sign their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements when Land Claims was enacted in 1993. The NNDFN has been actively involved in the negotiations throughout the years and often played a decisive role in shaping the process. Under their agreement, the NNDFN will play an important part in economic development and resource management in their traditional territory, and in the establishment of the McArthur Wildlife Sanctuary and Horseshoe Slough as Special Management Areas. The agreement also led to the designation of the Bonnet Plume River as a Canadian Heritage River.

The Economy

Top

The economy of Mayo is linked to providing services for the people of Mayo and surrounding area. Government services, including First Nation administration, provide about a third of the jobs in the community.

Tourism is a growing segment of the local economy. Accommodation, food services, recreation services (such as guiding and outfitting), and retail outlets cater to tourists in the area and provide work for local residents. About 25 percent of employment is created through the accommodation, food services, recreation services, and retail trade sectors. Roughly 10 percent of employment is in transportation, which relies partly on tourism. Tourist attractions in the area include the history of the mines around Mayo, Keno, and Elsa, the Keno City Mining Museum, and the Binet House Interpretive Centre in Mayo, a restored heritage house containing historic photographs and an extensive geological display. Other tourist activities along the Silver Trail include camping and hiking along a section of the Trans Canada Trail, and hunting and fishing on local lakes and rivers.

At one time Mayo was a distribution centre for mining operations, and then a centre for exploration and development work. A major lead-zinc-silver mine operated at Keno Hill until 1989. The 1996 Census showed that some residents still worked in mining.

Historically Mayo was a fur trade centre, and trapping is still a part of the local economy.

People in the area also hunt and fish for their own food.

Work

Top

At the time of the 1996 Census, about 76 percent of the Mayo population aged 15 and older said they were active in the labour market. This is quite a bit lower than the overall Yukon proportion of 81 percent. It reflects limitations in the community's economy and a general sense that work was not available in the area. Unemployment, as reported in the 1996 Census, was very close to the Yukon average. In contrast to the overall Yukon pattern, women in Mayo reported higher unemployment than did men -- about 13 percent, compared to the 1996 Yukon-wide unemployment rate of 10 percent for women.

Young people in Mayo were only a little less likely to be involved in the labour market than were young people in the overall Yukon population. Numbers in the Census results are too small to give a reasonable measurement of youth unemployment. However, the generally lower involvement in the formal labour market suggests that jobs simply are not available. Unemployment and the lack of long-term jobs are concerns of the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation, which has set a goal of developing long-term employment opportunities.

On average in 1998, 42 people in Mayo claimed employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). The number of people claiming employment insurance has averaged from the low 30s to low 40s for much of the 1990s.

Relatively little work is full-time and full year in Mayo, reflecting the importance of seasonal, tourism-based work in the economy. The 1996 Census reported that people working full-time, full year accounted for only 32 percent of all workers in Mayo, far short of the 44 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

Self-employment is slightly higher in Mayo, at 14 percent of all employment. In the Yukon as a whole self-employment accounts for 13 percent of all work.

Despite the lower proportion of people working on a full-time, full year basis in Mayo, average employment income for all workers is about 84

percent of the Yukon average (the Yukon average was estimated at $30,000 in 1998). Longer work hours in the summer season likely make up for a shortage of work at other times. Those working on a full-time, full year basis in Mayo earned about 92 percent of the Yukon full-time, full year average (estimated at about $44,300 in 1998).

At the time of the 1996 Census, about 18 percent of total employment in Mayo was in government and education occupations like teachers, social workers, and assistants. These occupations make up 10 percent of Yukon-wide employment. Other sizeable occupation fields related to government and business include management and administration. Management occupations have a 9-percent share in Mayo, compared to 11 percent in the Yukon as a whole. People in administration occupations are 9 percent of the Mayo workforce, compared to the Yukon average of 18 percent.

Sales and service occupations, such as retail sales, guides, and food service workers, provide about 24 percent of total employment in Mayo, close to the Yukon average of 25 percent.

In 1996, trades and transport occupations, such as construction workers, mechanics, or truck drivers, accounted for 15 percent of employment in Mayo. Occupations in mining, forestry, and trapping accounted for 12 percent of employment.

Education

Top

In the 1996 Census, nearly 40 percent of Mayo people aged 15 years or older reported having taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. Seventeen percent of people aged 15 and older had taken some university-level courses. About half of these, or 9 percent of those aged 15 years or older, had completed a university degree. Twenty-two percent reported that their highest level of education was some secondary school, and 15 percent said their highest level was less than Grade 9.

Eighty percent of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school, or taking some education, during 1996. This is higher than the Yukon average.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Mining was a factor in the past for Mayo and could well be a factor in the future. While mining is currently weak throughout the Yukon, the Mayo area encompasses a number of new projects and an old, very productive mine. All are potential sources of employment. However, they are all waiting for the same thing -- a turn-around in precious and base metal prices. In real terms, metal prices are near their lowest levels since modern mining started. In addition, most companies need to raise outside capital. That is very difficult when the equity market is down on an industry sector, as it currently is on mining. As a result, development or production funds are hard to find, no matter how valuable the mineral deposit might be. However, zinc, a mainstay of Yukon and Mayo-area mining, is considered by many analysts to be the first metal likely to see price recovery.

A couple of major projects are on the Yukon's list of top mining projects for 1999. Keno Hill, originally scheduled to reopen its lead-zinc-silver property in 1999, is described as on a care and maintenance basis waiting for higher metal prices. More recent information suggests that assets might be sold off, which makes it less likely that this mine will reopen. Also on the list is the Dublin Gulch/Clear Creek project, currently in the permit application process and working towards production. Again, mineral prices are the key.

Creating and extending tourism activity will provide more opportunities and jobs than will mining in the near term. Positive factors for tourism include the history of the area, the potential for combining trips to Dawson City and Mayo, local hiking routes, and growing capacity to provide services for tourists. The development of adventure tourism businesses and the ability to offer a slate of activities are important factors in attracting tourists to the area for longer visits.

Administration and community development are becoming more important in Mayo. These fields require skills in financial areas, information handling, organizing people, and computer use. Tourism occupations are varied, but will require small business management skills and very good communications skills.

Community Services

Top

Education from the elementary level to post-secondary level is available in Mayo. Kindergarten to Grade 12 is available at J. V. Clark School. Like all Yukon schools, the core curriculum (80%) follows the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, and students are eligible to write B.C. departmental exams.

The Mayo Campus of Yukon College, one of the older community campuses, is located in J. V. Clark School. It has a tradition of working closely with local and territorial organizations, including the Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation, local businesses, the Yukon Chamber of Mines, the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, and several mining corporations. The campus offers full-time academic upgrading plus a broad range of other programs, courses, workshops, and seminars, including mine training, early childhood development, and employment preparation.

The Mayo Nursing Station is a community health centre with health care provided by three community nurse practitioners. The Mayo Nursing Station holds regular clinics Monday to Friday. The centre also provides after-hours emergency service.

Policing is provided by a RCMP detachment of one corporal and two constables.

Community social services include a YTG Health and Social Services social worker, the Yukon Housing Corporation Office, and a Department of Justice probation officer. Yukon Family Services provides counseling services for Mayo out of its Dawson City office.

The Na-Cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation offers social services to its members and in certain cases to the whole community. These include social services administration, a community health worker, and housing department. Through additional partnerships with other governments, they are able to provide Native Court Worker services, homecare, alcohol and drug services, and employment outreach services. The First Nation Lands Department is staffed by two GIS technicians, a resource officer, and a fisheries technician.

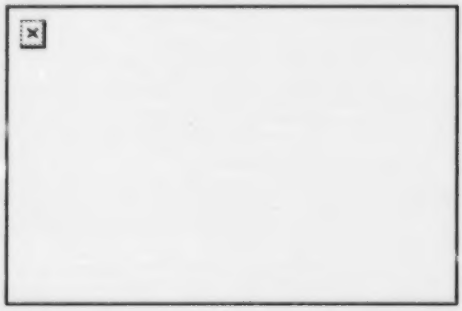
Fire services are provided by a volunteer service through the Village of Mayo. The Village also provides recreational activities such as a winter carnival and Canada Day celebrations through the services of a full-time Recreation Director. It is also responsible for the provision of playschool to preschoolers two mornings a week. In

recent years, a major project has upgraded water and sewage systems to the community.

Ambulance and Search and Rescue services are provided by community volunteers through partnerships with the territorial government. Yukon Energy Corporation supplies electric power from the Mayo hydroelectric dam, backed up by a secondary diesel generator. Yukon Community and Transportation Services maintains a 24-hour 365-day staffed weather station and community airport radio services at the Mayo airport.

The Yukon Territorial Agent provides services through the Yukon Liquor Corporation facilities in Mayo. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

The community is served by a Renewable Resources District Office. This is staffed by two conservation officers and a regional biologist. The federal government staffs a Lands, Water and Forest District Office with two resource management officers, and a Mining Recorder's office with two mining recorders and a mining inspector.



Post office service includes mail trucked in three times a week. Local dial-up Internet access is available in Mayo. Banking services are available three days a week in Mayo.

Road access is by the Silver Trail, which connects with the North Klondike Highway near Stewart Crossing. Whitehorse is 407 kilometres south, a five-hour drive away. Dawson City is 235 kilometres northwest on the Klondike Highway.

Tourist services include two motels, three restaurants, two service stations, a store, and businesses catering to wilderness tours and fishing.

Services for Business

Top

In Mayo, business services such as access to fax machines, use of a phone, and access to the Internet are often provided on a volunteer basis through community organizations or partners. Most services are also available through the hotels for a fee. Generally these services are available year round. Services in the community are currently expanding. In the near future it is anticipated that the college campus

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will offer public access to computers for work or the Internet. Other amenities such as cell-phones and cable TV are not yet available.

Cost of Living

Top

Goods and services, other than cigarettes, are consistently more expensive in Mayo than in Whitehorse. Some products, like meat, are close to the Whitehorse price. Others, like gasoline and fruit and vegetables, are substantially more expensive. On average, it costs about 8 percent more to live in Mayo than in Whitehorse.

The 1996 Census provided information on housing in the Village of Mayo. In 1996 there were 125 occupied dwellings, 45 of them managed by the First Nation. The average value of houses was reported as $65,595 for a two to three bedroom house. Rent paid for rental housing averaged $459 a month in 1996. The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports that there are 81 houses in the whole community administered for First Nation members.

Living in the Community

Top

Living in a small northern community can be a wonderful adventure for the right person. Not all people stay long enough to achieve the status of sourdough, but the average cheechako, or newcomer, will find a community of pleasant and welcoming people. The winters are long but manageable if one accepts the fact that working at minus 30 is a lifestyle choice, not an inconvenience. There is little in the way of career hierarchy in the community and thus all your co-workers will be your peers.

The cross-cultural nature of the community provides vast rewards for those who choose to take part. The First Nations culture of living on and respect for the land gives a beautiful insight into how we choose to interact with the environment and relate to other community members. While turnover of community members happens to some extent, Mayo is blessed with a core group of people who have been here for generations and have raised both children and grandchildren in the area. A long history has given the community deep roots.

The wilderness environment leaves newcomers little doubt as to what to take advantage of. Boredom is never an option, given the natural playground available

in Mayo's backyard. Adventures on the land and water await them.

Climate

Top

The central Yukon, where Mayo is located, experiences the greatest range of annual temperatures of any place in North America. Mayo holds the Yukon high-temperature record, based on June 14, 1969, when the thermometer peaked at 36.1 degrees Celsius. The lowest the temperature has dropped in Mayo is minus 62.2 C, recorded on February 3, 1947. Mayo also holds the Canadian record for the greatest range of absolute temperatures, with a difference of 98.3 degrees Celsius between the extreme high and extreme low.

Historical weather records show that the average daily temperature in January in Mayo is minus 26.9 C, while in July the daily average was plus 15.6 C. These figures represent the 24-hour average. Typical daily highs in July are 22.4 C and in January minus 21.7 C. Annual precipitation averages 318.4 millimetres. This includes 214 millimetres of rain and 145 centimetres of snow.

More Information

Top

Community and business service information for Mayo is available at http://www.yukonweb.com/community/mayo/

The municipal government can be contacted at Village of Mayo, Box 160, Mayo YT, Y0B 1M0, Phone: (867) 996-2317, Fax: (867) 996-2907.

Information about the Mayo campus of Yukon College can be found at http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Details about the Na-cho Ny'a'k Dun First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

Further information about the First Nation is available at http://www.yfnta.org/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon

economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

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The Community of Old Crow

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Old Crow is the most northerly community in the Yukon, and the only community that can't be reached by road. It is located on the banks of the Porcupine River, within the Arctic Circle about 800 kilometres north of Whitehorse. Old Crow is the home of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

According to archaeological evidence, the Old Crow area might be the site of the earliest human occupation in North America. The record of people in the area can be traced back about 15,000 years. The community of Old Crow became a year-round settlement in the 1950s with the building of a school and store. Before this, the site was a gathering spot for hunting and for trade along the Porcupine River.

Old Crow is almost next door to one of Canada's newest national parks. Vuntut National Park was created as a result of the Vuntut Gwitchin land claims settlement. The park and an adjacent Special Management Area encompass much of Old Crow Flats, a world-renowned wetland. They will be jointly managed by government and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation is part of the Gwich'in people whose traditional territory extends across parts of Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. The people of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation live a traditional life, relying heavily on the Porcupine Caribou herd.

People

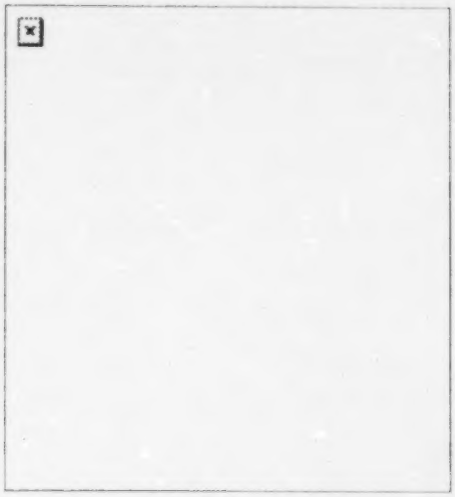
Top

The population of Old Crow was slightly under 300 in 1998. The population has varied between 260 and 300 through the 1990s.

Old Crow is predominantly a First Nations community. About 90 percent of the population are members of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

Predictably in a traditional community, most residents have lived in the area for a long time. However, many young people and adults leave for a time to pursue education or to look for work. The 1996 Census indicated that 75 percent of Old Crow's population had lived in the community for at least five years. About 10 percent of people living in Old Crow in 1996 had come to Old Crow from outside of the Yukon, significantly lower than the 22 percent for the overall Yukon population.

The age distribution of the Old Crow population is significantly different from that of the Yukon as a whole. There are proportionately more children in the community, with 28 percent of the population aged 14 or under. This compares with 22 percent in the Yukon overall. The 15-to-24 age group makes up 14 percent of the total, close to the Yukon average of 13 percent. There are also proportionately more people over 65 years of age. Nine percent of Old Crow residents fall into that age range, compared to 5 percent Yukon-wide.



Working-age adults, those aged 25 to 64, make up a far lower proportion of the total population than the Yukon average. This gap in the population reflects the lack of market work in Old Crow and a pattern of adults leaving the community, at least for a time, in order to find work.

Forty-eight percent of the population is female, slightly lower than the 49-percent proportion for the Yukon as a whole.

First Nations

The Vuntut Gwitchin of the Northern Yukon belong to the Athapaskan language family and their traditional area of use extends far into Alaska and the Northwest Territories. One of the oldest archaeological sites of North America, the Bluefish Caves Site, has been located on the Gwitchin's land base. The ancient ancestors of the Gwitchin have inhabited the land for at least 15,000 years, according to archaeological findings. The Gwitchin have many subdivisions. The people of the Old Crow are known as the Vuntut Gwitchin, their close relatives who lived in the Blackstone area are known as the Tukudh Dug-oo, and the people of the Peel River area are known as the Tetlit Gwich'in. Close relatives are also in the Alaskan village

of Fort Yukon, and they are visited frequently.

The Gwitchin followed a nomadic way of life and hunted caribou as a main source of their diet, drawing on the resources of the Porcupine Caribou herd, which remains a main staple of the Gwitchin diet today. They also relied heavily on the muskrat population that continues to be harvested at Crow Flats. Prior to settling in the village of Old Crow, the Vuntut lived in Fort Yukon. They moved to Rampart House, a trading post, in 1867 when the US/Canada border was established.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation has a registered membership of 455 as of April 1999. About 200 members live outside the community. The First Nation administers most services in Old Crow and is actively involved in protecting a traditional lifestyle for the people.

The Vuntut Gwitchin were one of the first four First Nations to complete their negotiations for First Nation Final and Self-Government Agreements on May 31, 1992. The agreements became part of the highest law of Canada when they were initialed by the Vuntut Gwitchin, the Yukon Government and the federal government on May 29, 1995. Today the Vuntut are implementing their agreements and are coming up to the five-year review provision set out in the Final Agreements. The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement follows the structure laid out in the Umbrella Final Agreement but contains provisions specific to the Vuntut people and their environment. In particular, it helps safeguard the habitat of the Porcupine Caribou herd with the establishment of the Vuntut National Park. This park is managed cooperatively with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

The Economy

Top

The economy of Old Crow and the Vuntut Gwitchin is largely a traditional, subsistence-based economy. Many people rely on traditional hunting, fishing, and trapping activities for food. The Vuntut Gwitchin people have relied on the Porcupine Caribou herd for generations. They use the caribou for food, as well as for skins, clothing, and other purposes. Living close to nature, the people make sure that no part of the caribou is wasted. Some seasonal work in hunting and fishing also provides income.

There is a very limited market-based economy in Old Crow, in addition to traditional activities. Government services provide a significant share of total employment in the market, or money, economy. Over 60 percent of measurable employment falls into this category, compared with 21 percent across the Yukon. Government services in Old Crow include the First Nation government and administration of services for First Nation members, as well as territorial and other government services like policing.

Since the Vuntut Gwitchin Council is responsible for providing most services in Old Crow, First Nation government employment includes such things as construction and maintenance of housing and similar services. In addition, First Nation government activities involve providing social services and support for the elderly. Other First Nation employees find seasonal work in projects run by the First Nation or in other seasonal government jobs.

Education and health care also provide some employment in the community. The Northern Store and Arctic Circle Services both employ several people from the community. Other industry sectors either offer no employment in Old Crow or the numbers are too small for measurement.

Work

Top

In Old Crow, the proportion of adults involved in the market economy and labour market is far smaller than for the Yukon as a whole. The 1996 Census indicates that only 63 percent of Old Crow residents over 15 said they were involved in the formal labour market. The average across the Territory was 81 percent. Even with the lower participation in the market economy, unemployment is higher in Old Crow than for the Yukon in general.

Lack of work is a particular concern for young adults in the community. Only 50 percent of those aged 15 to 24 reported being involved in the labour market in 1996. The Yukon-wide level of involvement is about 70 percent. This low participation rate is an indication of few work opportunities. Many young people do not expect to find work and simply do not become involved in the formal labour market.

On average, 14 people claimed employment insurance (formerly unemployment

insurance) in Old Crow in 1998. This is up from an average of 8 in the previous year, but close to the average through much of the 1990s.

Work in the Old Crow area is less likely to be full-time, full year than the Yukon average. The 1996 Census reported that 33 percent of all workers were working full-time, full year, compared with 44 percent for the Yukon as a whole.

In 1996, less than 10 percent of Old Crow residents working in the market economy reported that they were mainly self-employed. The Yukon-wide equivalent is 13 percent.

The average employment income in Old Crow is about 71 percent of the Yukon average which was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those working on a full-time, full year basis, the gap is a little smaller -- 83 percent of the average full-time, full year Yukon earnings which were estimated at about $44,300 in 1998. The averages are based on all workers in the community, and include people like RCMP officers, teachers, and nurses, as well as people in locally based administration or services jobs.

The employment share by occupation in Old Crow reflects the concentration of work in government services and other services like teaching, health care, or maintenance. The largest share of work is in sales or service occupations, such as homecare support, or childcare. Other people work in administration, management, or trades.

Education

Top

According to information in the 1996 Census, about 45 percent of Old Crow people aged 15 years or older have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. A further 20 percent of the same age group said that their highest level of education was some secondary school. Twenty percent reported completing Grade 9 or less.

About 8 percent had taken some university-level education. Of this group, about three-quarters -- or 6 percent of the population over 15 years of age -- had completed a university degree.

Fewer than half of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school

or taking some education during 1996. This is lower than the Yukon average and reflects the distance young people must travel to complete extensive further education.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

The people of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation are concerned about maintaining their traditional lifestyle. They have established active communications, using the Internet, to ensure that the breeding ground of the Porcupine Caribou herd is not affected by developments in Alaska and that their rights, and the rights of the larger Gwich'in Nation, to pursue traditional activities are supported.

With support from the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy, the Vuntut Gwitchin are also looking at economic and community development projects that could provide employment opportunities. The Vuntut Gwitchin are isolated by distance and lack of road access or easy transportation. However, the First Nation has made effective use of the Internet to link to the outside world.

Nearby Vuntut National Park and the Special Management Area adjacent to it could provide some employment for Old Crow residents in the future. The First Nation is a full partner in wildlife and wildlife habitat management in both the park and the Special Management Area. Vuntut Gwitchin people could well play a major role in future research, administration, and enforcement.

Old Crow is far off the beaten path. However, it is certainly possible that there will be tourist interest in the area. Attractions include pristine wilderness areas near the community, Vuntut National Park, and the culture and traditional lifestyle of the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. There already are visitors, especially government representatives and scientists, travelling to Old Crow. Further accommodation and food services might be provided for them.

The skills required to operate accommodation and food services will be very important in establishing tourism activity in Old Crow or providing more services for government or business visitors. Communication skills are also important, both in using the Internet for marketing and in providing information and services to visitors. Other emerging needs are community development skills, in both economic and social services fields.

Community Services

Top

A beautiful new school with gymnasium, shops, and a modern computer lab has just been constructed. The Chief Zzeh Gittlit School offers kindergarten to Grade 10. Most students still move to Whitehorse to complete high school. Eventually students may be able to complete higher grades in the community. Gwich'in language and Gwich'in life have been incorporated into the curriculum, which otherwise follows the B.C. curriculum. The school is an integral part of community life. The new gymnasium is used almost every night for various activities. In addition, the students spend time on the land and at the school's wilderness cabin during the school year.

The Old Crow campus of Yukon College -- recently renamed the Alice Frost Community Campus -- first opened its doors in 1987. Alice Frost was instrumental in bringing about the new building that houses the college. The campus, in partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, offers training to meet the needs of the youth and adult population in the community. Recently, a 12-month Office/Business Program was offered in order to train people to work for the new self-government. College programs have included wilderness tourism, carpentry apprenticeship, computers, accounting, varying levels of science, mathematics, and English, small engine repair, driver training (class 3-7), and arctic plumbing.

Old Crow has a community health centre, which is staffed by two community nurses and is open weekdays. A doctor is available the first week of each month. Emergency services are available at any time.

YTG Health and Social Services has a social worker providing services in the community.

The RCMP operates a detachment in Old Crow with one corporal and two constables. Old Crow is also served by a probation officer who visits monthly from Whitehorse.

The Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Social Programs Department provides community social development services, including in-home adult care, supportive counseling and referral, and native courtworker services. The Chuu-ttha Youth Camp accepts youth from 12 to 17 years of age from around the Yukon.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd supplies power via a diesel generating plant.

VGFN and YTG maintain the local roads, water and sewer, and fire protection.

Mail is flown in and out on weekdays and available for pick-up between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Other goods are brought in by air freight.

Local dial-up access to the Internet is available in the community.

Banking is done through the Toronto-Dominion agency run by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, and located in the Northern Store.

Access to Old Crow is by air, with a gravel airstrip. There is regularly scheduled service six days a week from Whitehorse, excluding Sunday.

The Northern Store sells groceries and some dry goods, and Arctic Circle Services has a hardware and lumber outlet, in addition to ATV/snowmobile repair, heavy equipment, heating, truck rental, and welding. Dagoo General Store offers dry goods, hardware, and snacks. Mabel's provides take-out service for cappuccino and snacks, and a gasoline outlet is run by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. Other services include Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations and Douglas & Bella's Movie Rental.

Services for Business

Top

There are pay phones at the airport, the RCMP detachment, and the VGFN office. Yukon College offers free access to the Internet and email between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Ch'oo Deenjik Accommodations is open year-round for business people and others visiting the community. Old Crow is "dry" which simply means that alcohol cannot be brought into the community.

Cost of Living

Top

There is no comparative price survey for Old Crow. Since goods come into the community by air freight, the cost of products from outside is high.

The 1996 Census identified 105 occupied private dwellings in Old Crow. The average value was $46,840 for a house averaging just under two bedrooms. Rental housing cost an average of $390 a month in 1996. A later report, *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles*, reports 130 housing units in the community.

Living in the Community

Top

Old Crow is the most northwesterly village in

Canada. Although situated above the Arctic Circle, there are many evergreen trees in this village and the surrounding wilderness. The scenic Porcupine River runs on the southern edge of the village. In winter, the northern lights often dance in pink and green during the long nights, as the dog teams and wolves howl under the Arctic sky. On the other hand, the 24-hour daylight for three months of the summer might even generate a baseball game at 2 a.m. The ever-popular snowmobiles are replaced with ATVs, as the town continues to use its few miles of road.

The Gwitchin people, who make up over 90 percent of the population, have lived in this country for centuries. Because they are so close to the land and depend on the caribou for their sustenance, this village has a very traditional flavour. Moose, salmon, and whitefish are also staples. Berry picking and trapping muskrats are still common activities in a town where people still love the land and enjoy out-of-town excursions on the land.

Climate

Top

The climate in Old Crow reflects its location within the Arctic Circle. In 1997, weather reports showed the average daily temperature in January was minus 34.2 degrees Celsius, while in July the daily average was plus 14.5 degrees. Daily averages are based on a 24-hour day, so daytime temperatures are somewhat higher. The record high in 1997 was 27 degrees, and the record low was minus 52 degrees. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 273.3 millimetres. This included 160.8 millimetres of rain and 158.8 centimetres of snow.

More Information

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For information on Old Crow, see the community's website at http://www.oldcrow.yk.net/

For information about the Old Crow campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Details about the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon*

Region First Nation Profiles, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

Another source of information is *The Land Still Speaks* by Erin Sherry and the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, published in 1999 by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation.

For further information about the First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

The Community of Pelly Crossing

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Pelly Crossing was originally a ferry crossing and a construction camp for workers building the Klondike Highway. The community's economic base disappeared when highway construction ended in the 1950s. Then it gained a new lease on life as the home of the Selkirk First Nation. The people of the First Nation had settled near the old territorial capital of Fort Selkirk on the Yukon River. But the highway passed Fort Selkirk by, and the townsite was virtually abandoned. The Selkirk First Nation was relocated to Pelly Crossing to centralize services and make administration easier.

The community of Pelly Crossing is located along the Klondike Highway and on the bank of the Pelly River, 282 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse and 254 kilometres southeast of Dawson City.

People

Top

Pelly Crossing's 1998 population of 287 is higher by 40 than in 1991, but lower by 16 than the 1997 population of 303. Generally the population has stayed fairly constant through most of the 1990s.

Pelly is predominantly a First Nations community. The 1996 Census indicated that First Nation members made up over 85 percent of the community population. In addition, a few non-First Nations people live and work in Pelly Crossing.

There has been little movement into Pelly Crossing during the 1990s. The 1996 Census reported that just over 10 percent of residents had moved into the community during the previous five years, compared to 20 percent for the Yukon as a whole. Those who did move to Pelly Crossing typically came from elsewhere in the Yukon rather than from other provinces.

Fifty percent of the population is female, just over the Yukon average of 49 percent.

Pelly Crossing has proportionately more children than the Yukon's overall average. Twenty-nine percent of the Pelly population is aged 14 or under, compared to 22 percent Yukon-wide. The proportion of youth, aged 15 to 24, and of working-age adults is lower than the Yukon-wide picture. This suggests that some people leave the community to complete their education and to look for work elsewhere.

First Nations

Pelly Crossing is the home of the Selkirk First Nation, part of the Northern Tutchone cultural and language group and a participant in the Northern Tutchone Council. Northern Tutchone is a member of the Athapaskan language family. In April 1999 there were a total of 483 registered members of the Selkirk First Nation, of whom close to 200 lived in other communities. The Selkirk First Nation Council handles administration of community affairs.

Pelly Crossing became the more permanent home of the Selkirk First Nation after the construction of the Klondike Highway in the 1950s. Previously, the Northern Tutchone people headquartered at Fort Selkirk and Minto for parts of the year while hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering throughout their traditional areas in the yearly round. With the completion of the highway, the Fort Selkirk people moved to Minto and later to Pelly Crossing. As Minto was abandoned, some people moved to Pelly, some to Mayo, and some to Whitehorse. The Selkirk First Nation people are closely affiliated with the Northern Tutchone groups of the Na-cho Ny'a'k Dun and the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nations. As well, some members are able to trace their ancestry to the Southern Tutchone people of adjoining areas. The Selkirk First Nation people practice the traditional moiety system of Wolf and Crow, of which the potlatch system is an integral part.

Fort Selkirk is the location of a fur-trading fort established by the Hudson's Bay explorer Robert Campbell in the 1840s. The fort was later burned by the Coastal Tlingits, and was rebuilt at the present site in 1850. Today, Fort Selkirk is an important

heritage site and is co-managed by the Selkirk First Nation and the Government of Yukon. Many Selkirk First Nation members are employed on an annual basis, working on restoration and maintenance of the grounds and buildings at the site.

In recent years, the Selkirk First Nation has been working toward community healing and revival of their traditional culture and history to deal with the effects of mission school and the associated problems. A healing camp is being constructed and a cultural museum has been established. As well, traditional activities such as summer fish camps and winter camping are supported through First Nations programs. Selkirk First Nation people are actively involved with other First Nations in the Yukon in the revival of stick gambling, traditional songs and dances, and storytelling.

The Selkirk First Nation signed their Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements in the summer of 1997 at a ceremony held at Minto. The First Nation will participate in development projects in their traditional territory, and fishing and wildlife management. Special management areas will be established in the Ta'Tla Mun Lake area, L'hutsaw Wetland Habitat Protection Area and the McArthur Wildlife Sanctuary. As well, the Fort Selkirk site will be jointly owned, planned, and managed by the Selkirk First Nation and the Yukon Government.

The Economy

Top

Pelly Crossing's economy is based on a narrow range of activities. The government services and education sectors provide most of the market work. The main employer in the community is the Selkirk First Nation government, which provides work for about 20 people. Some people who normally live in Pelly Crossing move for at least part of the year to find work elsewhere.

The historic site of Fort Selkirk provides seasonal work for Selkirk First Nation members through a management agreement with the Yukon Heritage Branch. Employees work on restoration and maintenance of the historic townsite and maintenance of the river stopover campground.

Traditional activities also play a role in the Pelly Crossing economy. Many people get a significant portion of their food supply from hunting and fishing, and some earn cash through trapping.

Work

Top

At the time of the 1996 Census, about 79 percent of Pelly Crossing's adult population reported that they were involved in the formal labour market. This is only a little lower than the overall Yukon proportion. However, with a limited economy and few job opportunities available in the community, unemployment is very high. Over 30 percent of those in the labour force reported being unemployed in 1996, compared to the Yukon unemployment rate of 11 percent at the time of the Census. Unemployment is especially high for men. Forty percent of men reported that they were unemployed. Unemployment for women stood at about 20 percent.

Most young people in Pelly Crossing reported being involved in the formal labour force. Of these, about half were unemployed. This compares with a 17-percent youth unemployment rate across the Yukon in 1996.

This pattern of high unemployment for community residents is borne out by employment insurance numbers. In 1998, an average of 22 individuals claimed employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). The number of people claiming income from employment insurance has averaged well over 20 throughout the 1990s.

The 1996 Census did not report any information on work patterns (such as full-time, full year, or seasonal work), or on earnings for people living in Pelly Crossing. However other information on the local economy indicates that full-time, full year work is rare. Some adults are likely to move, for at least part of the year, to find work.

Most who are employed in the community work in service occupations, such as home care, sales and food services, or in social science, education, and government service occupations such as teachers and social workers. Other important occupations in Pelly Crossing are in construction trades or transport fields. Some people find employment in management and administration, and others work in primary industry occupations, such as mining, trapping, or forestry. The numbers

of people working in fields like health or arts are too small to be identified separately.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census indicates that almost 40 percent of Pelly Crossing's population aged 15 years or older have taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. About a quarter of that age group said that their highest level of education was some secondary school. Almost 20 percent reported that they had completed Grade 9 or less. About 10 percent said they had taken some university-level education.

Half of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school or taking some form of education during 1996.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

The Selkirk First Nation, supported by funding under the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS), is trying to improve the economic and work situation in Pelly Crossing through education as well as small business assistance.

Ventures to attract tourists to the community and keep them there appear the most likely options for new economic development. Tourism is increasingly important to the overall Yukon economy. Pelly Crossing has some potential for development in this field since the community is on a major tourist route to Dawson City. Pelly's interpretive centre for the Northern Tutchone People offers a cultural attraction to divert tourists from the highway.

In addition, Pelly Crossing is located close to Ddhaw Gro (formerly known as McArthur Wildlife Sanctuary), to Ta'Tla Mun (formerly Tatlmain Lake), a high-quality fly-in sportfishing lake, and to L'hutsaw wetlands (formerly Von Wilczek Lakes), an important wetland complex. All three areas lie in the Traditional Territory of the Selkirk First Nation and have been identified as Special Management Areas under the First Nation's land claim agreement. Development of management plans for these areas may allow the First Nation to build on the ecotourism potential.

The economic development approach being taken in Pelly Crossing -- looking for tourism opportunities, especially in ecotourism -- will require people to upgrade their skills to operate small business ventures.

Community Services

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Students can attend school from kindergarten to Grade 12 in Pelly Crossing at the Eliza Van Bibber School. The Pelly Crossing Campus of Yukon College is located in the old First Nation administration office. Its Northern Tutchone name, Hets'edan ku', means "learning house." Instructors come from outside the community to complement the local teachers of academic upgrading and continuing education courses. Staff at Hets'edan ku', in partnership with the Selkirk First Nation, have offered computer, accounting, and other office skills training, a technical upgrading course, and a small business program.

Pelly Crossing is served by a local community health centre, which has regular hours from Monday to Friday. This centre also provides 24-hour emergency service. A social worker is located in the Selkirk First Nation office.

The RCMP operates a detachment in Pelly Crossing, staffed by a corporal and two constables. Probation officer and native courtworker services are provided from Mayo.

The Selkirk First Nation administers community infrastructure, such as water, sewer, local road maintenance, community recreation, and fire protection.

A chief and six volunteers provide fire department services.

Electricity is provided by diesel generators operated by the Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd.

Road access is by an all-weather paved highway from Whitehorse. There is also road access to Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, and Ross River.

Mail is trucked in three times a week.

Banking services are provided in Pelly Crossing.

Community facilities include the Heritage Centre, an interpretive centre for the Northern Tutchone People, a community hall, a youth centre, and an arena/curling

A convenience store is located beside the highway. There is a 24-hour card lock system for obtaining gas. There is a sewage disposal area for mobile homes, as well as a place to refill water supplies. There are laundry facilities as well. Across the store and off the highway close to the river is a campground. It is free of charge.

During the summer, Penny's Place operates as a fast-food outlet. It provides hamburgers, hot dogs, ice cream, cappuccino, coffee, and cold drinks. Penny's also operates a small gift shop. Sandwiches, coffee, drinks, and snack food are available at the grocery store throughout the year.

Minto Resorts, on the Yukon River, is owned by the Selkirk Development Corporation and provides an RV campground and tour bus lunch stop during the summer tourist season. It is located about 20 miles from Pelly Crossing.

There is no hotel in Pelly Crossing, but the Anglican church rents out its well-equipped cabin throughout the year. The cabin can sleep two people and, though rustic, it is comfortable. If interested, call (867) 537-3131.

Services for Business

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There is limited access to the Internet and email at the Pelly Crossing Community Library. The library is located at the Eliza Van Bibber School.

Cost of Living

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Cost of living information is not available for Pelly Crossing. However, costs in Carmacks, located about 100 kilometres south of Pelly Crossing, are about 9 percent higher than in Whitehorse. A higher cost of living is very likely in Pelly Crossing.

The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports 113 houses in the community. The earlier 1996 Census has information on 80 dwellings. It sets an average cost for these houses at just over $60,000 for a two-bedroom house. The cost of rental housing averaged $425 a month in 1996.

Living in the Community

Top

Pelly Crossing is situated in a beautiful valley, with

the Pelly River flowing through it. Though it is a relatively small community, there are several recreational facilities available. The Tommy McGinty Baseball Park is well used in the summer. There is an artificial-ice curling rink, and a bonspiel is held yearly. A covered rink for hockey is under construction. The Youth Centre has excellent exercise equipment and a pool table.

Both hunting and fishing are important community activities as well as a source of food. When the salmon run takes place, the village vacates and all move to their cabins, or fish camps, near the river. Fish are caught and preserved for winter use.

The residents of Pelly are very involved with stick gambling. There are three groups of teams: Adult (mixed men and women), Women, and Youth. They practice and compete during the winter and spring. Usually, in June there is a Yukon-wide competition. In the past, one or another of the Pelly teams has won first prize. The competition in the year 2000 will be held at Minto Landing -- the Selkirk First Nation General Assembly site.

Climate

Top

The climate of Pelly Crossing varies considerably. In 1997, weather reports showed that the average daily temperature in January was minus 27.9 degrees Celsius. In July the average was plus 15.1 degrees. Daily averages are based on a 24-hour day, so daytime temperatures are often well above the average. The all-time record low was minus 60 Celsius in 1968. The all-time record high was plus 35 in 1969. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 411.1 millimetres (compared to 309.6 millimetres in 1996). This includes 294.4 millimetres of rain and 116.7 centimetres of snow. Normal precipitation is 298.8 millimetres.

This information was gathered at Pelly River Ranch. Weather information has been recorded in the area since 1899. At first weather information was gathered at Fort Selkirk and forwarded to Environment Canada. Later the reporting site was moved to the Pelly River Ranch. The ranch is about 45 kilometres west of Pelly Crossing by road, in the same river valley as the community.

More Information

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For information about Hets'edan ku', the Pelly Crossing campus of Yukon College,

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Details about the Selkirk First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

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The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

The Community of Ross River

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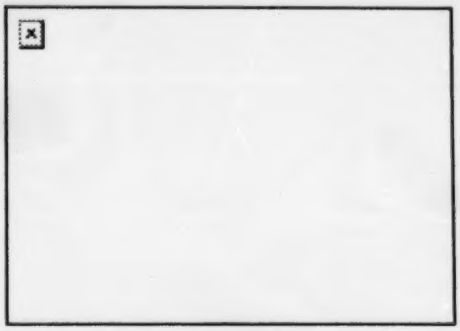


The area around Ross River is well known for its hunting and fishing resources. Ross River itself is the home of the Ross River Dena Council. The community lies 360 kilometres northeast of Whitehorse near the junction of the Campbell Highway and the Canol Road.

Originally the site was used by First Nations people as a seasonal camp. In the early 1900s, prospecting and mining increased in the area, and a trading post was established nearby in 1903. In the early 1940s, the American Army built the Canol Pipeline, from Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories to Whitehorse, and the accompanying Canol Road opened the Ross River area to overland traffic. Government offices were established in Ross River after the Second World War. In 1962, Ross River was relocated to its current site on the Campbell Highway.

People

Top

In 1998, the population of Ross River was 397. That is very close to the population level at the beginning of the 1990s, although down from the 435 reached in 1997.

The First Nation, the Ross River Dena Council, makes up about three-quarters of the total population of the community. This compares with a 20-percent representation of First Nations people in the overall Yukon population.

There was relatively little movement into Ross River during much of the 1990s. In 1996, 76 percent of those living in Ross River had lived there for at least the previous five years. Movement from outside of the Yukon into Ross River over this time period, at about 10 percent of residents, was far lower than seen for the Yukon as a whole (22 percent).

Yukon Government population counts show that Ross River has proportionately more children and older people living in the community than is the pattern across the Yukon. The youngest age group, those 14 years of age or younger, make up 28 percent of the population in Ross River, compared to the 22-percent average for the Yukon. Nine percent of the population is over 65 years of age, considerably higher than the Yukon-wide proportion of 6 percent.

Young people aged 15 to 24 years of age are represented in the Ross River population at about the same rate as the Yukon average.

The working age population, those aged between 25 and 64 years, is proportionately far smaller in Ross River than for the Yukon overall. This reflects some movement of adults out of the community in search of employment.

About 47 percent of the people in Ross River are female, a smaller proportion than the 49-percent female representation in the total Yukon population.

First Nations

Top

The people of the Ross River Dena Council are known as the Kaska and their language is a member of the Athapaskan language family. The Ross River Dena Council is affiliated with the Kaska Tribal Council, which connects the people to their close Kaska relations in northern British Columbia and to the Liard First Nation. The Kaska of Ross River are also closely connected and related to their neighbors in Fort Norman, N.W.T., who make frequent visits to cultural events held at Coffee Lake, a traditional gathering area of the Kaska. In April 1999, there were 415 registered members of the Ross River First Nation. About 100 members live outside the community.

Prior to contact with Europeans, the Kaska lived a nomadic lifestyle, following game and harvesting resources from the land and environment. They utilized all that the land provided, never wasting any parts of animals and devising innovative tool technology. Like many of the First Nations of the

Yukon, the Kaska lived in dome structures with caribou hides as winter dwellings and brush camps for summer. The moiety clan system of Wolf and Crow was established as their social system, and laws were embedded into the traditional justice and laws of the culture. Within the Kaska language there are many regional dialects. Recently a Kaska Language Dictionary has been produced documenting the various dialects.

The Ross River Dena Council is currently negotiating their First Nation Final Agreement and Self-Government Agreement with the federal and Yukon Governments.

The Ross River Dena Council and its members have been working towards the healing of their people after the effects of mission schools, the loss of identity, and the upheaval of their culture due to massive change over the last 100 years, much like most of Yukon's First Nations people. The Ross River Dena people revived a unique style of drumming and singing resulting in the Ross River Drummers travelling all over the Yukon to perform. Ross River was and remains an important site for stick gambling. Many First Nations from all areas of the Yukon travel there annually to partake in this event.

The Economy

Top

The Ross River area is rich in minerals. However, Ross River's economy has not benefited much in terms of mining jobs, although mining has provided some work to the local area. Mining accounted for about 8 percent of total Ross River employment in 1996 a little above the average of 6 percent across the Yukon. Since 1996, a number of mines have closed and the mining sector has declined worldwide. Currently there is little mining employment.

Construction provided 11 percent of total employment in 1996. With recent construction activity, the sector has continued to provide work opportunities. Construction activity in 1999 has been strong and has included the building of the new school, two new police houses, the new police station, and the pool. Other projects include the Grew Creek project, the North Canol

slashing project, the firesmart and seismic projects, and the new streetlights.

The government services sector includes Yukon Territorial departments, federal, municipal, and First Nation administration. It provides the largest share of employment in Ross River, employing some 30 percent of all workers. First Nation administration and development provide a significant number of jobs to First Nations people. Territorial government services also provide some government administration jobs for Ross River residents. Education, at 8 percent of total employment, and health services, at 5 percent, employ a smaller proportion of workers.

Transportation, retail, accommodation, and food services all provide jobs in the Ross River community. Some jobs are linked to the provision of services for mining exploration, but the major demand for services comes from local people, from business visitors, and from tourism. Wilderness guiding provides some employment. Hunting, in particular, extends the typical summer tourist season into the fall. The popularity of the area among Yukon hunters increases the hunting-season traffic substantially.

Other industry sectors, such as agriculture, logging, finance and other services, involve too few people to show measurable employment.

Some Ross River residents identify trapping as their main area of work. In addition, many people in Ross River practice subsistence economic activities, supplying themselves with much of their food through hunting and fishing.

Work

Top

Close to 80 percent of the Ross River adults (those aged 15 years or older) are active in the labour market, very near the 81-percent involvement in the labour market across the Yukon. Unemployment is significantly higher in Ross River than the average for the Yukon. In the 1996 Census, 23 percent of the workforce said they were unemployed. This is more than twice the 11-percent unemployment rate reported for the whole Territory. The Census reported that unemployment for men stood at 26 percent, while the women's unemployment rate was a little lower at 19 percent.

On average during 1998, 27 people claimed employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance) in Ross River. The number of people claiming employment insurance has varied between 19 and 32 over the period from 1991 to

In Ross River, young people aged 15 to 24 are a little less likely to be working or looking for work than are youth in the Yukon as a whole. About 63 percent of Ross River youth said they were in the formal labour market, compared to 70 percent Yukon-wide. Even when young adults were involved in the labour market in 1996, they had little chance of finding employment. The Ross River youth unemployment rate in 1996 stood at 60 percent, compared to the youth unemployment rate of 17 percent across the Yukon.

People are somewhat less likely to work full-time, full year in Ross River than in the Yukon overall. Thirty-nine percent of work was reported as full-time, full year, compared to 44 percent Yukon-wide.

Self-employment is somewhat lower than average in Ross River. It accounted for less than 10 percent of total work activity, compared to 13 percent across the Yukon.

Average employment income in Ross River is about 68 percent of the Yukon average. The Yukon average income from employment was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those with full-time, full year work, average earnings were 74 percent of the Yukon average, which was estimated at $44,300 in 1998.

The main fields of work in Ross River are sales and service occupations. Management, business, and administration fields provide a smaller share of employment than they do on average across the Yukon.

Construction, mechanics and other trades, primary, and processing occupations employ a large proportion of the workforce when the mines are in operation or when significant exploration is taking place. Employment in construction trades continues to be an important work area for Ross River as there are several construction projects under way in 1999. However, the proportion of the workforce in the primary and processing occupations is lower at this time, because the Faro mine is closed and there is less mining exploration taking place. Another occupation found in Ross River is trapping.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census showed that 51 percent of Ross River people over 15 years of age had taken some non-university post-secondary or college education or training. A

further 10 percent reported they had some university education, with 4 percent having completed university degrees. Twenty percent listed secondary school (grades 9 and above) as their highest level of education, and 16 percent responded that their highest level of education was under Grade 9.

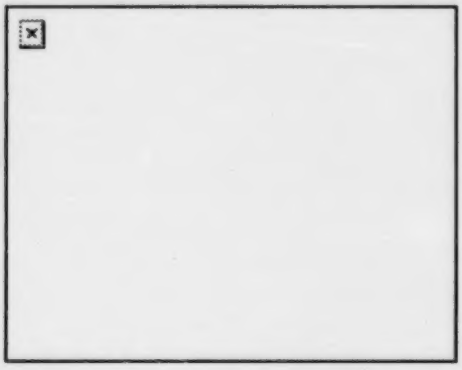
In 1996, 42 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 years reported that they were attending school. This is lower than the pattern for the Yukon as a whole and reflects the distance that Ross River students must travel to complete high school or to take extensive further education.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Mining continues to hold potential for economic development in the Ross River/Faro region. Faro itself lies at the northwest end of a strongly mineralised area that curves southeast towards Watson Lake. It passes through deposits bearing some of the famous names in Yukon base-metal mining. The Finlayson Lake district in southeastern Yukon is seen as having potential, and Ross River will likely benefit if current interest is justified. The Liard First Nation's agreement with the Kudz ze Kaya mine on hiring First Nations people should also have some impact in the Ross River area, if that mine starts up.

The Ross River Dena Development Corporation, the business arm of the Ross River Dena Council, owns and operates a general store in the community and has signed agreements with mining companies related to development. Since there is a great need for long-term jobs in Ross River, the corporation is looking for other economic development opportunities.



Construction of the new school in Ross River provided employment this year. The agreement with the contractor required that local people be hired if they have the necessary qualifications.

Tourism is also a means of diversifying the local economy and providing employment for local people. While Ross River is off the beaten path of overseas tourists, there are opportunities to develop more tourism based on hunting, fishing, and adventure activities.

There are emerging occupations in Ross River in local administration and community development, which require financial, administrative, and planning

skills. Tourism development will emphasize small business operations in fields like outfitting and guiding as well as accommodation and food services.

Community Services

Top

Education from kindergarten to Grade 10 is available at Ross River School. Students can complete Grade 12 in Watson Lake, Faro, or Whitehorse.

Post-secondary education is provided through the Ross River Community Campus of Yukon College. Ross River Elders named the campus Dena Cho Kanadi or "big people learning" in 1996. Currently, the Ross River Campus is located in the community recreation building, and in 2001 it will move into the new Ross River school. The College Campus offers academic upgrading, employment skill programs in mine training, business and administrative assistance, and traditional cultural skills.

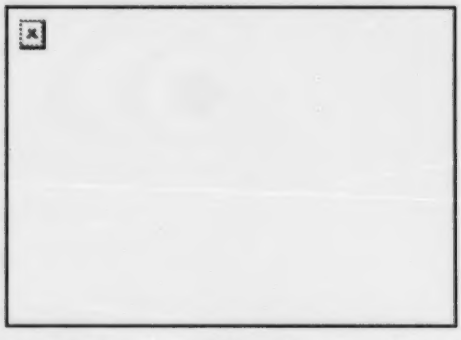
Health care is provided through the community health centre, daily from Monday to Friday. A treatment clinic is held in the morning, and community health programs in the afternoons. The health centre also provides 24-hour emergency service.

The Ross River Dena Council offers social services to its members, including counseling, social assistance, adult care, and recreation services. The First Nation also has a Community Education Liaison Coordinator and provides native courtworker services.

The Ross River Dena Corporation, the economic development arm of the First Nation, runs a laundromat, shower, and gas station.

Health and Social Services provides a resident social worker in Ross River.

The RCMP detachment is three strong, one corporal and two constables, one of whom must be a First Nations person. Justice of the Peace, native courtworkers, and probation officer services are provided locally.



The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies hydroelectric power from the Whitehorse dam, backed up by three diesel generating units. Water is trucked three times a week from a filtration well to

all houses, and sanitation is by septic tanks, subsurface tile fields, and outhouses.

Fire service is provided by a volunteer force, with pumper, hoses, and breathing equipment. There is also a volunteer ambulance crew and a volunteer search and rescue group. Other volunteer groups active in Ross River include a Youth Justice Committee, school and campus councils, and an inter-agency resource team.

Mail is trucked in and out of Ross River postal outlet three times a week. Local dial-up Internet access is available in the community.

Banking facilities are available for three and a half hours a day, four days a week. They are located at the Ross River Dena Council Office.

There is a community library at Ross River.

St. Michael's is a Roman Catholic church located in Ross River.

The Campbell Highway, the main road connection for Ross River, is an unpaved, all-weather road that runs from Carmacks to Watson Lake. From Ross River, the trip to Whitehorse is 477 kilometres or about a five-hour drive. Watson Lake is 373 kilometres away from Ross River in the opposite direction. Ross River is also accessible seasonally by way of the South Canol Road, which meets the Alaska Highway at Johnson's Crossing.

There are two retail outlets in Ross River. The Ross River Service Centre carries groceries, hardware, fishing and hunting supplies. The Ross River Dena Store carries groceries.

A variety of small businesses provide services ranging from construction to accounting to outfitting for hunters. In addition, business services for mining exploration include line-cutting and equipment rental.

Services for Business

Top

Internet can be accessed at the Community Campus of Yukon College or the public library. Many organizations and private users access the Internet on a regular basis.

There is no cell phone coverage in the Ross River area.

Although all businesses and government agencies have photocopiers and fax machines, there is no public facility for these services.

Year-round accommodation is available at the Welcome Inn. Its services include a restaurant, bar, laundromat, showers, gas and diesel, tire repairs, small equipment rental, and aviation fuel.

The Leprechaun Hideaway B & B and Restaurant operates a restaurant and cabin rental in summer months. and Jackfish Lake Bed & Breakfast also operates during the summer.

Cost of Living

Top

A separate cost of living survey is not available for Ross River. Faro, the nearest community, shows prices that, in general, are about 2 percent above those in Whitehorse. It is very likely, therefore, that it will cost at least 2 percent more to purchase goods in Ross River than in Whitehorse.

The 1996 Census reported 120 occupied private dwellings in Ross River. The majority of these, 65, were identified as First Nation housing. A later report, the *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles*, states that the Ross River Dena Council administers 110 houses. For owner-occupied housing, with two to three bedrooms, Census information shows an average value of $60,440 in Ross River. Rented accommodation cost an average of $517 a month in 1996.

Living in the Community

Top

Ross River is rich in Kaska culture and tradition. The community holds an annual Culture Exchange, a week-long celebration that attracts people from across Canada and Alaska. Many come to perform; others to observe. The tradition of knowledge, culture, and art is shared with everyone who attends.

Ross River is situated in the centre of a vast and beautiful land. For those who love the outdoors, this is the place to visit. Everything is at our back door: snowmobiling, skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, fishing, hunting, hiking, or enjoying the wildlife. Whether you are a beginner or experienced, we have it all. It is a wonderful place to come closer to nature.

There are many historical sites, and there are people in the area who are authorities on local history. There is an annual gathering of the Kaska people and their cultural practices held at Coffee Lake. Ross River is rich in traditional knowledge, and this knowledge is shared and passed from generation to generation. The community has

a long history of both First Nations people and non-First Nations people working collaboratively on projects of mutual interest and benefit.

Life in small communities provides tranquility and privacy that is often impossible to achieve in larger centres. The relaxed atmosphere of the community and people who live here make it a welcoming place to visit or to live.

Climate

Top

Environment Canada's information on the climate in Ross River notes that the average temperature in July is 13.6 degrees Celsius, with daily maximums averaging 20.9 degrees Celsius. January average temperature in Ross River is minus 27.2 degrees Celsius, with daily highs reaching minus 21.8 degrees Celsius.

Average annual rainfall in Ross River is 161.3 millimetres. Average annual snowfall is 98 centimetres, with a range between 146 and 67 centimetres over 15 years of records.

More Information

Top

Details about the Ross River Dena Council First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For further information about the First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

For information about the Ross River Community Campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

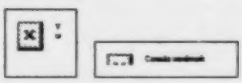
For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html



The Community of Teslin

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

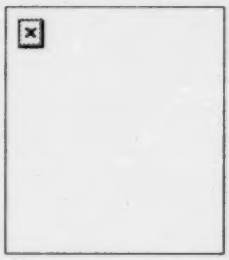
Teslin is located where the Nisutlin River flows into Teslin Lake. The recreational potential of the area and spectacular views of the big lake from the Alaska Highway hold considerable appeal for tourists. Teslin is, in fact, an active tourism centre with significant numbers of people stopping over during the summer months. The community lies 183 kilometres east of Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway. Watson Lake is about 260 kilometres further east.

Teslin is the home of the Teslin Tlingit Council. The Tlingit people have traveled through this area for centuries. Famous as traders, the Tlingit came from Alaska in search of furs for trading, and some settled in the Teslin area. Teslin Lake was an important fishing area for First Nations. During the Klondike Gold Rush, it was one of the waterways used to reach the Yukon River. A small trading post was established in 1903, mainly to serve the Tlingit people living in the area. After the Alaska Highway was built in 1942, Teslin became a permanent settlement.

People

Top

The population of Teslin averaged 454 in 1998, lower than it has been for many years and basically the same level as in 1991.



First Nation people belonging to the Teslin Tlingit Council make up about two-thirds of the total population of the community. This compares with a 20-percent representation of First Nations people in the overall Yukon population.

Teslin is a mix of people who have lived in the area for many years and some who moved in during the 1990s. In 1996, a little over 70 percent of the population had lived in Teslin for at least the previous five years. This is close to the proportion for the Yukon as a whole. Movement from outside of the Yukon into Teslin, at about 15 percent, was lower than the Yukon-wide rate of 22 percent.

Teslin's age structure reflects some movement of adults out of the area to look for work elsewhere.

There are slightly more children in the community than the Yukon average. Twenty-three percent of people are aged 14 or under, compared to 22 percent for the Yukon as a whole. The working-age groups, 25 to 44 years and 45 to 64 years, are proportionately a little smaller than the Yukon average. People aged 65 and over make up 9 percent of the Teslin population, quite a bit higher than the proportion found on average in the Yukon.

About 46 percent of people in Teslin are female, a smaller proportion than the 49-percent female representation in the total Yukon population.

First Nations

The First Nations people of Teslin are Inland Tlingit-speaking people who trace their ancestry to Tlingit people who migrated inland through the Taku River from Alaskan coastal areas during the last centuries. Many of the Teslin people trace their lineage to the Juneau/Auk Bay area. As Tlingit language speakers, the Teslin people speak an entirely different language from the remainder of the Yukon First Nations whose languages are of the Athapaskan family. These coastal people quickly adopted an interior lifestyle, travelling a seasonal round, following the movements of fish and game, and harvesting plants and berries. As well, they continued to travel to the coast to trade fur harvests, often on behalf of their families inland. While adopting an interior lifestyle, the Inland Tlingit people also retained their clan and potlatch systems.

The Teslin people are thought to have begun arriving in the area some 200 to 300 years ago. While they first entered the Yukon as traders who headquartered on the coast, the Tlingit people eventually began to intermarry and settle in the area on a more permanent basis in the mid-19th century. They brought with them their language, clan systems, and cultural practices. Many of the surrounding Athapaskan-speaking groups today reflect these cultural influences.

The Teslin Tlingit people are closely related to the Inland Tlingit people of Atlin in northern British Columbia. The two communities are connected through a system of trails that were used extensively until the 1940s when the Alaska Highway was built through the interior of the Yukon.

The Teslin village site has been a summer stopping

place since early times. People would gather there for summer "holidays" and socializing, usually at the end of the trapping season in June. The Inland Tlingit people of Teslin began settling year-round in the community in the 1940s when the Alaska Highway was built. In April 1999, there were 518 registered members of the Teslin Tlingit Council. About 170 live outside the community. The Teslin Tlingit Council is affiliated with the Tlingit Tribal Council, the Daxa Nation.

The Teslin Tlingit Council was an active participant in the land claims negotiating process from 1973 to 1993, and was one of the first four First Nations to complete its Land Claims and Self-Government package in 1993. Today, the TTC follows the traditional clan system of governing itself. A spokesperson is appointed from each of the five clans to form the "council" and a Chief is appointed by the elders. Currently there are two deputy chiefs as well, one from each of the moieties. The clan system has been incorporated into the TTC and is an important aspect of the Self-Government Agreement. Also, the Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area has been established and the TTC is responsible for joint management of it.

Potlatching remains an integral component in the lifestyle of the Teslin people, as do traditional values and belief systems. Elders are held in high esteem and remain fundamental in the governance system.

The Economy

Top

The economy of Teslin relies heavily on traditional and subsistence activities. However, tourism has become an important aspect of the economy. It provides work and income for many during the summer season, when the community becomes a busy centre. Other activities include government services.

The government services sector provides the largest share of employment in Teslin, occupying about half of all workers. The Teslin Tlingit Council is the largest single employer. First Nation administration, services, and development provide a significant number of jobs to First Nations people. Yukon land claims work has added to government services sector employment. The territorial government, which has highway, forestry, and social services in this area, also provides some jobs.

Tourism has been growing considerably in this part

of the Yukon. The industry provides many seasonal jobs in and around Teslin. Tourism activity in Teslin includes accommodation, food services, transportation services, cultural activities, and outfitting and guiding services. Teslin Lake, which is 138 kilometres long and runs across the British Columbia border, is famous for its fishing. Nisutlin Bay is known for northern pike. The Nisutlin delta, now the Nisutlin River Delta National Wildlife Area, is known for its bird and wildlife habitat. The Teslin Tlingit Council has become actively involved in tourism and currently operates an outfitting company.

The Yukon River Timber Company, owned by the Teslin Tlingit Council, operates a sawmill employing about 15 people. Some expansion is planned for spring 2000.

Teslin residents also practice subsistence economic activities, supplying themselves with much of their food through hunting and fishing.

Work

Top

The proportion of adults in the Teslin population is somewhat smaller than the adult share of the larger Yukon population. This is an indication that many adults move away from Teslin to look for work. About 70 percent of community residents aged 15 years and up are involved in the labour market, less than the 81-percent involvement across the Yukon. Unemployment is significantly higher in Teslin than the average for the Yukon. In the 1996 Census, 23 percent of people in the workforce were unemployed, more than twice the unemployment rate reported for the whole Territory. A third of men in the Teslin labour force were unemployed.

On average during 1998, 37 people claimed employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance) in Teslin. The number of people claiming employment insurance has varied between 30 and 49 over the period from 1991 to 1998. Therelatively high number of employment insurance claimants in Teslin is a further indication that

much of the available work lasts only part of the year.

Teslin's young people aged 15 to 24 are less likely to be involved in the labour market than are youth in the Yukon as a whole. About half of Teslin youth said they were in the formal labour market, compared to 70 percent Yukon-wide. There is no measure of unemployment for this group, but the low involvement indicates a sense of limited job possibilities.

The Census did not provide any measure of full-time, full year work for Teslin. However, other information indicates that much of the work available in the community, apart from government employment, is seasonal.

Information on self-employment, drawn from the Census, shows a relatively low rate of 6 percent. The Yukon-wide rate is 13 percent.

Earnings information was not available from the 1996 Census.

The main fields of work in Teslin's formal labour market are sales and service occupations linked to tourism. These include food and accommodation service jobs as well as such occupations as outfitters and guides. The high proportion of Teslin workers involved in art, culture, and recreation occupations is also related to tourism.

Management occupations have a higher share of employment in Teslin than on average across the Yukon. This reflects the presence of small-business owner-operators of tourism enterprises, as well as employment in the First Nation government. Business and administration fields provide a smaller share of employment than they do on average across the Yukon. Other occupations represented in Teslin include teachers, nurses, social workers, and community workers in government, education, social services, and health occupation fields.

Some jobs in Teslin fall into the trades and transportation category, which includes occupations involved in auto repair, maintenance, and construction.

Education

Top

According to the 1996 Census, 43 percent of Teslin people aged 15 and over reported having taken some non-university post-secondary or college education or training. A further 9 percent reported they had some university education. Four percent had completed university degrees. Twenty-two percent listed secondary

school (grades 9 and above) as their highest level of education, and 17 percent responded that their highest level of education was under Grade 9.

In 1996, about 60 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 years reported that they were attending school. This is close to the pattern for the Yukon as a whole.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Tourism provides the most potential for economic growth in Teslin. The community could expand existing tourism activities by providing more services locally.

The Teslin area offers limited employment. There is a considerable need to develop long-term opportunities, particularly for First Nations people. The Teslin Tlingit Council plans to assist small businesses in order to increase employment. The TTC sees particular potential in tourism and has already ventured into the field. The First Nation owns and operates the largest local outfitting business. Cultural activities and arts and crafts production already exist in Teslin. They could be developed further, expanding the amount and range of products for sale. Increased markets would encourage people to base their work in Teslin.

The Teslin Tlingit Council plans to expand the Yukon River Timber Company sawmill in the spring of 2000.

One of the few mines currently producing in the Yukon, the Marlin rhodonite mine, is in the Teslin area. Rhodonite is a semi-precious stone used for jewelry and small carvings. The local supply could prove helpful in developing arts suitable for tourist sales.

Additional tourism in the Teslin area will create more employment opportunities in accommodation and food services. Further tourism activities could be developed through using local knowledge of the area, especially of things like fishing locations and bird habitat. More visitors might also be attracted by arts and cultural and traditional activities and displays. Local people will need skills that allow them to start up and run small businesses. Communication skills are also very important for most tourism, especially anything building on cultural and traditional areas.

Community Services

Top

Education from kindergarten to Grade 9 is available

at Teslin School. Students go to Whitehorse to complete Grade 12.

Post-secondary education is provided through the Teslin Campus of Yukon College, located in the Teslin Tlingit Council administration building. The campus offers a full academic upgrading program, a variety of short courses and workshops, and specialized programs, like forest management training, employment readiness/ career development, office management, and introductory carpentry.

Health care is provided through the community health centre, which offers daily service and is staffed by two resident nurses. A physician visits monthly. The health centre also provides 24-hour emergency service.

YTG Health and Social Services provides a social worker. Yukon Family Services Association provides itinerant services from Whitehorse.

The Teslin Tlingit Council offers social services to its members through a Social Programs team. There is a social administrator, drug and alcohol worker, community health representative, Community Education Liaison Coordinator, and youth worker. Services include social assistance, in-home care, counseling, and referral. Native courtworker services are provided out of Whitehorse.

Policing is provided by the RCMP detachment, which is staffed by one corporal, one constable, and one First Nations special constable. Probation officer services are provided out of Whitehorse.

The fire department is run by a chief and 12 volunteer firefighters.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies hydroelectric power from the Whitehorse dam, with diesel generator back-up.

Water supply is from a well at the townsite or from individual wells piped to houses. Sewage service for most housing is provided through a piped sewer system.

Recreation facilities include an arena, playgrounds, community club, curling rink, and a community library. Other facilities operated by the Teslin Tlingit Council include a Long House (cultural centre), healing centre, and drop-in centre.

Mail is trucked in and out of Teslin three times a week. Local dial-up Internet

access is available in the community.

The community has banking services.

Teslin is on the Alaska Highway, which is paved and maintained for all-weather use. It is 183 kilometres away from Whitehorse, a driving time of two hours. There is a 5,500-foot gravel runway maintained year-round, and float plane access from Teslin Lake.

As a tourism centre, Teslin offers many facilities for travelers and tourists. The George Johnston Museum, which has a collection of First Nations artifacts and gold rush relics on display, is open in the summer. The area has motels and lodges, an assortment of food services, a general store, campgrounds and RV parks, and various highway services providing repairs, gasoline, and propane.

Services for Business

Top

Access to fax, photocopying, Internet, and email facilities is limited to the public library. Accommodation and food services are available year-round.

Cost of Living

Top

Teslin is close to Whitehorse and on the Alaska Highway, the main supply route for the Yukon. These factors help keep prices relatively low. Although prices for some things are higher, on average, than in Whitehorse, other prices are lower. Overall, it costs about 2 percent more to live in Teslin than to live in Whitehorse.

The 1996 Census reported 125 occupied private dwellings in Teslin but did not have information about house values. The *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* report notes that the Teslin Tlingit Council administers 119 houses. Rented houses within the settlement of Teslin cost an average of $450 a month in 1996. Summer rentals of lodges and houses on Teslin Lake are often advertised at much higher rates, depending on the quality of the facility.

Living in the Community

Top

Teslin is rich in Tlingit culture and tradition. The Tlingit language is making a

comeback, fostered in the community and taught in the school.

Teslin is located on the shores of Teslin Lake, which comprises a major part of the Yukon River drainage system. This was a popular route to the Klondike goldfields at the turn of the century. The abundance of lakes, rivers, and streams makes Teslin a fishing paradise. Wildlife abounds in the area. Canoeing, kayaking, and power boating are popular summer activities. Winter brings out the snowmobilers and cross-country ski enthusiasts.

Climate

Top

Proximity to the Pacific coast has a moderating effect on Teslin compared with the rest of the Yukon. The region is semi-arid so precipitation is light. Temperatures range from summer highs in the mid-30s Celsius to the occasional winter low of minus 40 Celsius.

More Information

Top

Details about the Teslin Tlingit Council can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For further information about the First Nation, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

The municipal government can be contacted at Village of Teslin, Box 32, Teslin YT, Y0A 1B0, Phone: (867) 390-2530, Fax: (867) 390-2104.

For information about the Teslin Community Campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Teslin School has a website with information about the community and the Teslin Tlingit culture: http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/teslin/index.html

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

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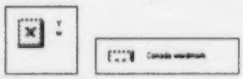


The Community of Watson Lake

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

Watson Lake is often called "The Gateway to the Yukon." The community is located in the southeastern corner of the Territory, just 14 kilometres from where the Alaska Highway crosses the British Columbia border. Watson Lake is a key transportation hub. It sits at the junction of the Alaska Highway, the Robert Campbell Highway to central Yukon and the Northwest Territories, and the Stewart-Cassiar Highway from central British Columbia. The Yukon's capital, Whitehorse, is 459 kilometres to the northwest.

The community of Watson Lake consists of the town of Watson Lake and the adjoining settlements of the Liard First Nation, including Upper Liard. Watson Lake lies within the traditional territory of the Liard First Nation, part of the Kaska Tribal Council. A community was established at Watson Lake in 1939 when the Canadian government decided to build a chain of airports across the North, including one at Watson Lake. The new community was a supply and accommodation centre for airport construction in 1941 and for the building of the Alaska Highway a year later. After both were complete, Watson Lake became a service centre for the highway and, later, for the resource-rich region of the upper Liard River and its tributaries.

People

Top

The population of the Watson Lake community averaged 1690 people in 1998, a drop of just over 100 from the previous year. The population has fluctuated through the 1990s, but is about 5 percent higher than it was in 1991.

The Liard First Nation is an important segment of the population in the Watson Lake community. The 1996 Census shows 38 percent of the community's people identified themselves as First Nations people. This compares with 20 percent for the Yukon overall.

Watson Lake has a somewhat higher-than-average population movement from outside the Yukon. People who had moved from outside of the Yukon in the five years preceding the 1996 Census made up 28 percent of the Watson Lake population. The average for the Yukon as a whole was 22 percent. Most arrived from other provinces, with only a small number moving from outside Canada.

The age structure of the population is also very similar to that of the Yukon as a whole. Children aged 14 and under make up 21 percent of the total population, and people over 65 are a further 6 percent.

Young people aged 15 to 24 are 14 percent of the total Watson Lake population, slightly higher than in the Yukon as a whole. Working-age adults, from 25 to 64 years, make up 59 percent of the population, the same proportion found in the overall Yukon population.

Close to 47 percent of the Watson Lake population is female, below the overall Yukon average of 49 percent.

First Nations

As of April 1999, the Liard First Nation, which is part of the Kaska Tribal Council, had a registered membership of 913, split between 471 male and 442 female. A little under half of the First Nation membership is reported as living on First Nation land, either reserves or crown land. Many members live in the town of Watson Lake, while others live elsewhere in the Yukon or outside the Territory.

The Kaska language of the Liard First Nation is one of the Athapaskan languages. The Kaska people are closely related to the Kaska Dena people of Ross River. As with other Yukon First Nations groups, the Kaska traditionally hunted and gathered on the land for their livelihood. They traveled in extended family groups throughout their traditional territory, hunting, fishing, and gathering vegetation as the seasons permitted. The Kaska were organized into a Wolf and Crow moiety system and observed the potlatch for ceremonial occasions.

Kaska First Nations people first began experiencing contact with white fur traders

as early as the 1820s and 30s. Kaska territory was also part of the route to the Klondike goldfields in 1897-98. The First Nations people of the area were the subjects of conversion to the Roman Catholic church as missionaries entered the area in the 1920s. With the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942, Watson Lake and Upper Liard became more permanent residences for the Kaska people.

Today, the Kaska people are actively involved in cultural revival, teaching the children the history, language, and traditional practices of the people. The First Nation supports heritage development, language classes, and elder involvement in healing programs and land-based activities. A Kaska language dictionary has recently been published.

Today, the Kaska people of the Liard First Nation are working toward settlement of their land claims and self-government. Currently not a member of the Council of Yukon First Nations, the LFN is considering rejoining the Council, but has also been involved in establishing unity with other Kaska groups in the region.

The Economy

Top

Watson Lake is the regional service and business centre for the southeastern Yukon, and has a diversified economy. Forestry is important, and energy exploration provides some further economic activity. Business travel and commercial transportation, linked to resource exploration and to Watson Lake's role as a transportation hub, are also important. Finally, tourism has been increasing in importance to Watson Lake, as it has been across the Yukon.

The government services sector is a major source of employment in this community. Large shares of community employment also come from the trade sector and the accommodation and food services sector. Employment in forestry, at 8 percent of the total, is significantly higher than it is for the overall Yukon economy. Construction provides a further 7 percent of total employment, close to the Yukon average.

Since Watson Lake provides community services to the surrounding area, the share of employment in health and education services is fairly close to the overall Yukon pattern.

Work

Top

Census results showed that more than 80 percent of

the Watson Lake population over the age of 15 were in the labour force in 1996. This is close to the overall Yukon rate.

Unemployment for the town of Watson Lake was just over 11 percent in 1996, again close to the Yukon average. However, the First Nation settlements showed significantly higher unemployment rates of 30 percent or more.

Records for employment insurance (formerly unemployment insurance) showed an average of 120 people claiming payments in 1998, up very slightly from the 1997 level.

A little over 60 percent of young adults (15 to 24 years of age) are active in the labour market. This is somewhat lower than the overall Yukon participation rate of 69 percent for this age group. About 17 percent of young people reported being unemployed in 1996. This matches the Yukon youth unemployment rate.

Work in Watson Lake is only slightly less likely to be full-time, full year than the overall Yukon work pattern. Forty-three percent of people reported that they worked on a full-time, full year basis, compared to 44 percent for the Yukon.

The average employment income for all workers in Watson Lake is about 90 percent of the Yukon average which was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those working on a full-time, full year basis, the gap is somewhat higher. Watson Lake workers earned 83 percent of average Yukon earnings which were estimated at about $44,300 in 1998. Income information was not reported in the Census for the local First Nation settlements.

About 12 percent of those who work in the Watson Lake area reported that their main work is through self-employment. This is close to the Yukon-wide self-employment level.

The main fields of work in Watson Lake are sales and service occupations, construction and other trades, transport, and equipment operation. These large occupational fields provide a greater share of employment in the Watson Lake area than they do at the Territory as a whole. Another large employment field is business and administration occupations, although employment in this occupational area is

somewhat lower than the Yukon-wide proportion.

Occupations linked with primary industries, particularly forestry, provide 7 percent of employment, much higher than the 4 percent average across the Yukon.

Since Watson Lake is a service community for the southeastern Yukon, there is a relatively high proportion of work in social service, government, education, and health care occupations.

Education

Top

In the 1996 Census, 36 percent of Watson Lake area people over 15 years of age reported having taken some non-university post-secondary education or training. A further 15 percent reported they had some university education. Five percent had completed university degrees. Thirty-four percent said secondary school (grades 9 and above) was their highest level of education, and 9 percent said their highest level of education was less than Grade 9.

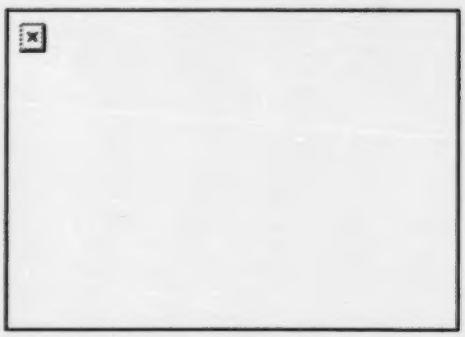
In 1996, 44 percent of the population aged 15 to 24 reported that they were attending school, mostly on a full-time basis.

Future Prospects and Developments

Top

Watson Lake is experiencing a small boom, with the opening of a new sawmill, and construction of three major community facilities. The area has potential for economic gains from further forestry development and, possibly, the specialized manufacturing of wood products. Increased employment in this area hinges on completion of the Timber Harvesting Agreement. Oil and gas exploration has started to increase in the southeastern Yukon. This will provide some additional employment, either directly or indirectly through services to exploration crews.

Tourism shows considerable growth potential for the Yukon and can be expected to continue increasing in the Watson Lake area. Tourism is mostly a summer industry, but efforts are underway to increase the number of winter tourists coming to Watson Lake. The main target for winter tourism has been groups from Southeast Asia.



The anticipated opening of a private school for international students in the fall of

2000 will also contribute to the growth of Watson Lake.

There has been some mining activity on a small scale. Despite continued exploration of the southeastern Yukon, most larger-scale operations remain on hold until metal prices increase. Among them are the Kudz ze Kaya near Ross River and the Sa Dene Hes mine north of Watson Lake.

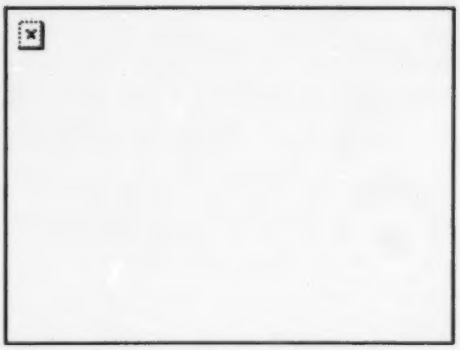
Forestry, mining, and all resource sectors are working increasingly toward environmentally friendly and sustainable operations. There will be a growing need for both technical skills and sound management practice in resource industries. Tourism and ecotourism activities also need these skills. In addition, workers in all of these sectors require good communication skills.

Watson Lake is involved in an Internet project to increase its bandwidth and develop a Call Centre. This centre is a place where telephone calls are placed or received in high volume for the purpose of sales, marketing, customer service, telemarketing, technical support, or other specialized business activities. This project is scheduled for completion in 2000.

Community Services

Top

Education from elementary to post-secondary is available in Watson Lake. Johnson Elementary School has a capacity of 300, and Watson Lake Secondary School has a capacity of 250. Like all Yukon schools, the core curriculum (80%) follows the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, and students are eligible to write B.C. departmental exams.



Yukon College has a campus in a separate wing of the secondary school. The Campus provides the community with courses in academic upgrading, computer skills and first aid. It is a resource for information on student financial aid, and other colleges and universities. It also provides job-related training in the areas of entry-level trades, office administration, accounting, and early childhood education. It has a computer lab with approximately 20 computers and dedicated Internet access. The campus is used as a meeting place for many groups and organizations and is equipped with teleconferencing capabilities.

Health care is provided through the Parhelion Medical Clinic and through the

Watson Lake Hospital. The clinic is currently staffed with three full-time physicians and boasts a pharmacy to serve residents. The hospital has a full-time Nurse in Charge and seven nurses. Public Health services are run out of the hospital. They are staffed by two full-time nurses who provide service to Watson Lake, Upper Liard, and Lower Post. The hospital is also responsible for the homecare nurse who works closely with the local seniors group.

The community has a registered massage therapist. Optometry services are provided on a regular basis from Whitehorse.

Watson Lake has a local dentist who operates out of an office located in the community's strip mall.

Local trained volunteers provide ambulance service, while the RCMP provides policing for the community from the detachment. It is staffed with nine members and is responsible for Watson Lake, Lower Post, Upper Liard, and the surrounding area.

A full-time fire chief and a large group of volunteer members provide fire department services.

Yukon Electrical Company provides the community with electricity generated from a diesel generating plant located on the Campbell Highway. A project to utilize the waste heat to heat the secondary school, swimming pool and new recreation complex is scheduled for completion in the fall of 1999. Plans to extend this project to include local businesses are also being discussed.

Other community social services include two full-time social workers, a probation officer, a full-time resident counselor from Yukon Family Services, and a shelter for women and children. A part-time Housing Association person is responsible for Yukon Housing. Native courtworker services are provided through the Liard First Nation.

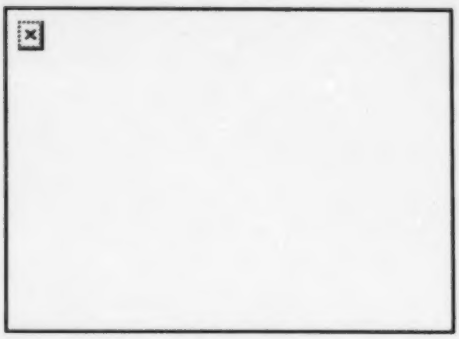
Watson Lake Outreach is a community-based employment resource centre. Its mandate is to increase overall employability and eventual employment by offering employment-related services. The focus is on non-job-ready clients. It attempts to direct job-ready clients towards the regular Human Resources Development Canada system.

Territorial Agent services are provided through the Yukon Liquor Corporation

facilities in Watson Lake. These services include providing information and forms, accepting various applications, and issuing licences and permits.

The community has an excellent resource in the form of the Healthy Communities building located in the Old Log Church on the Alaska Highway. It not only acts as a resource but is also the centre for the Prenatal Nutrition program and the Children at Risk program.

The construction of a new post office building is currently under way and will be completed by December 1999. Mail is trucked in five days a week from either Whitehorse or Dawson Creek.



Road access is by all-weather paved highway, with Watson Lake located at the junction of the Alaska Highway (connecting to Whitehorse and to Dawson Creek and Edmonton) and the Robert Campbell Highway (connecting to the Northwest Territories). The junction of the Stewart/Cassiar Highway with the Alaska Highway is 26 kilometres from Watson Lake.

An airport is located 13 kilometres north of the community on the Robert Campbell Highway. It has a runway capable of supporting a 737 aircraft. The airport building has been declared a heritage building and has been restored to its original state. Several charter fixed-wing and helicopter companies are based in the community, offering passenger, freight, and courier services. A float plane base is also located at the north end of Watson Lake (the lake) near the airport.

Watson Lake has many small retail outlets that provide services to the community. Two grocery stores and two department stores service it. There are two hardware stores, which also supply building materials. A strip mall along the Alaska Highway houses a ladies' clothing store, catalogue sales outlet, and electronics outlet, as well as the local bank. There are six service stations, and three local companies supply propane and heating oil. During the summer, seven hotels and motels are open. One of these closes during the winter months. There are nine restaurants and fast-food establishments. Four of these remain open year-round.

Services for Business

Top

The four major hotels in Watson Lake offer fax and photocopying services to their customers. Three of these hotels remain open during the winter months. One hotel

and one motel offer Internet access. Internet access can also be obtained through the Northern Lights Centre, library, and Yukon College. The College and Northern Lights Centre have dedicated access while the library offers dial-up access only.

Meeting rooms are scattered throughout the community. Yukon College offers meeting rooms year-round as well as providing computer, fax, photocopying, and audio conferencing access. The Northern Lights Centre has a 110-seat theatre that can be used for multimedia presentations, and supports videoconferencing.

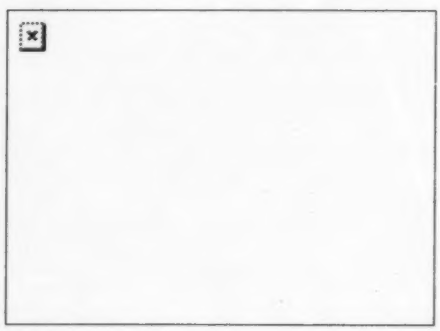
The town of Watson Lake has a cabin available for small meetings, and the Signpost Seniors can host small to medium-sized meetings. Two of the local hotels have meeting rooms, but only one is open year-round. The completion of the new Recreation Complex will give the community many more meeting rooms and the capability to host events up to 500 people.

Completion of the Call Centre will add an entirely new dimension to the business services already offered in the community.

Cost of Living

Top

In general, Whitehorse has the lowest prices in the Yukon, with prices higher in the smaller communities. Because Watson Lake is on the Alaska Highway, a major supply route from the south, some prices are actually a bit lower than Whitehorse. However, as the table shows, other prices are substantially higher. On average, it costs about 10 percent more to live in Watson Lake than in Whitehorse.



The 1996 Census showed 375 private dwellings in the town of Watson Lake, of which 310 were single, detached units and the remainder mainly semi-detached or row housing. Half of the homes were owned by householders, the other half rented. Houses in the town of Watson Lake had an average value of $101,838 in 1996 and typically averaged two to three bedrooms. People renting homes paid an average of $607 per month.

A further 100 to 120 private dwellings were counted in the First Nations settlements of Upper Liard, Two Mile, and Two and One-half Mile. All the First Nations houses were single detached. About 80 percent of the First Nations homes are administered by the Liard First Nation, with most of the remaining 20 percent

Living in the Community

Top

Watson Lake is a very active community. Its recreational facilities surpass anything in southern communities of the same size. It has a heated swimming pool for summer use, tennis courts, waterslide, skateboard park, golf course, and a ski hill with 10 runs, two T-bars and night skiing. There are 96 kilometres of multipurpose trails around the town. The numerous parks include Wye Lake Park in the city centre, Lucky Lake, just outside of town, and the Sign Post Forest, a major tourist attraction. A new recreation complex will be completed by July 2000. It will house a three-lane bowling alley, hockey arena and curling rink with artificial ice, a weight room, squash courts, meeting rooms, and a community hall capable of seating 500 people. The community has more than 75 organizations, which provide activities and services to its citizens from preschoolers to seniors.

A new town administration office is slated to open in early 2000. It will house the Watson Lake Public Library collection and the community's Toy Lending Library.

The Northern Lights Centre, which opened in 1997, acts as a tourist attraction in the summer and is utilized for movies, laser shows, presentations, and an animation school in winter. And even in the long days of summer it is possible to enjoy the Aurora Borealis -- or at least a high-tech representation of it -- at the theatre.

In 1999, Canadian astronaut Julie Payette took with her into space two artifacts from the Town. These are on display at the Centre along with other mementos of the space program.

Watson Lake is renowned for its Sign Post Forest, a collection of signs from all over. It is said to be the largest collection of "stolen" property in the world. Each year tourists visiting the community leave behind a small memory of themselves by placing a sign from their hometown in the forest.

Climate

Top

The climate in Watson Lake, as elsewhere in the Yukon, can vary considerably. In 1997, weather reports showed the average daily temperature in January was minus 27.7 degrees Celsius, while in July the daily average was plus 15.3 degrees. Daily averages are based on a 24-hour day, so daytime highs are apt to be substantially higher. The record high was 27 degrees, and the record low was minus 49 degrees.

Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 483.5 millimetres (compared to 358.0 millimetres in 1996). This included 289.7 millimetres of rain and 193.8 centimetres of snow.

More Information

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The town of Watson Lake has information available and posted on the Internet at http://www.yukonweb.com/community/watson/

Details about the Liard First Nation can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For further information about the First Nation, see http://www.yfnta.org/

For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For information about Watson Lake campus of Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/campuses/

The municipal government can be reached at Town of Watson Lake, Box 590, Watson Lake YT, Y0A 1C0, Phone: (867) 536-7778, Fax: (867) 536-7522.

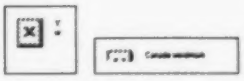
For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html



The Community of Whitehorse

People | First Nations | The Economy | Work | Education | Future Prospects and Developments | Community Services | Services for Business | Cost of Living | Living in the Community | Climate | More Information

Set in the wide valley of the Yukon River, Whitehorse is the capital of the Yukon and by far the largest community in the Territory. About 70 percent of the total Yukon population lives in the community of Whitehorse, and this includes the City of Whitehorse, Mount Lorne, Ibex Valley, Marsh Lake, and surrounding areas.

Historically, First Nations used the area around Whitehorse for food gathering and as a meeting place. The settlement of Whitehorse developed during the Klondike Gold Rush as a transportation hub. Whitehorse was the head of navigable waters on the Yukon River and an important stop on the journey to the Klondike. Once the White Pass and Yukon Railway linked Whitehorse with the Alaskan port of Skagway, Whitehorse became the centre of transportation into and out of the Territory. Since the Klondike Gold Rush era, Whitehorse has experienced a series of population booms and busts, mainly linked to mining and highway construction. In 1953 the Yukon Territorial Government moved the capital from Dawson City to Whitehorse.

Whitehorse is now a contemporary city and the government and business centre for the Yukon. The Yukon Territorial Government headquarters and several federal government offices are located here. The Council of Yukon First Nations also has its headquarters in Whitehorse. Most major Yukon businesses, utility companies, and services operate out of Whitehorse.

Government activity provides considerable economic stability to the Whitehorse area. Tourism has become a major source of economic growth for the city. Tourists often visit as they pass through, either along the Alaska Highway or by flying into the Whitehorse airport.

People

Top

In 1998, the population of the community of Whitehorse averaged 23,406, a little below the previous year's level of 24,018. The Whitehorse population increased in the early 1990s and has since remained around the 23,500 level. The population shifts have largely

been in reaction to the opening and closing of the lead-zinc mine at Faro. The mine is a major force in the Yukon economy and has been subject to closures when mineral prices declined.

Movement of people into and out of the area tends to be quite high, since the Whitehorse economy reacts to fluctuations in mining. However, Whitehorse has a stable population base. The 1996 Census reported that approximately 74 percent of people living in the Whitehorse area had been living there in 1991. The 1996 Census also reported that close to 30 percent of the Whitehorse population was born in the Yukon. In recent years, immigration to the Yukon and to Whitehorse from outside Canada has not been a source of population growth. However, some of the people moving to Whitehorse from elsewhere in Canada have been immigrants. The Whitehorse population now includes people from many countries.

First Nations people make up about 15 percent of the total Whitehorse-area population. This compares with First Nations representation of over 35 percent for the rest of the Yukon. The Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation both have their homes in the Whitehorse area. Other First Nations people, mainly from elsewhere in the Yukon, make up a large part of the First Nations population in the community.

Since it makes up such a large share of the overall Yukon population and thus influences Yukon numbers, Whitehorse has a very similar age distribution to the Yukon as a whole. Slightly more of the population is in the 15-to-24 age group, reflecting the fact that Whitehorse is an education centre and a place where young people come looking for work. There is also a slight difference between Whitehorse and the rest of the Yukon in the proportion of older people in the population. Five percent of the Whitehorse-area population is 65 years of age or older. About 6 percent of the population in the rest of the Yukon is 65 years of age or older.

At the end of 1998, 49 percent of the Whitehorse population was female.

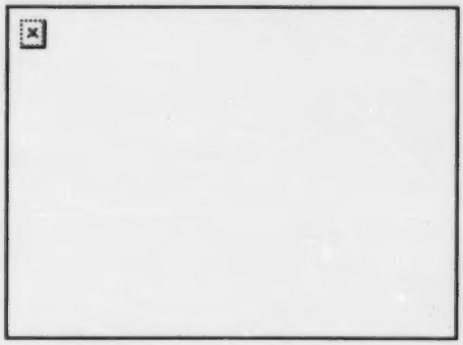
First Nations

Top

The Kwanlin Dun First Nation, based in the McIntyre subdivision of Whitehorse, has cultural affiliations with the Northern and Southern Tutchone as well as with

the Tagish from Marsh Lake but is also an amalgamation of many Yukon First Nation culture groups. As of April 1999, the registered population of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation was 961.

The Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation, who separated from the Kwanlin Dun First Nation in September of 1998, is affiliated with the Southern Tutchone Tribal Council and has members who are Southern Tutchone and Tagish. The traditional territory of the Ta'an is located around the Lake Laberge area. In April 1999, the Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation had a registered population of 196.



The First Nations people of the Whitehorse region enjoyed a nomadic way of life and traveled extensively throughout the area following big game, fishing, and trapping. Archaeological evidence at Canyon City shows that First Nation people have occupied that area for thousands of years. Many Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwach'an First Nations people worked for the steamboats that navigated the Yukon River up to Dawson City. Some were wood cutters, and others worked on board. Frank Slim, from the Ta'an, was a captain of one of the steamers. The two First Nations were grouped together as the Whitehorse Indian Band, which was located in the Industrial area of Whitehorse. They later moved to the McIntyre subdivision.

Both Ta'an Kwach'an and Kwanlin Dun First Nations are currently negotiating their First Nation Final Agreements and Self-Government Agreements with the federal and Yukon governments. Their Final Agreements will follow the format of the Umbrella Final Agreement, but with specific provisions that are unique to the environment and to the people.

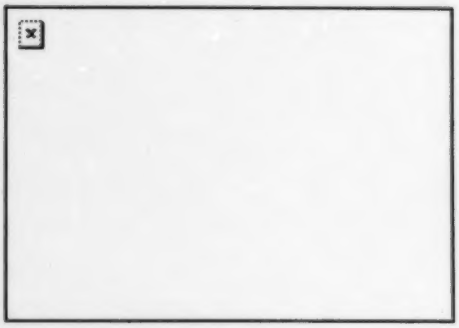
Kwanlin Dun today strives towards unification as a prerequisite to progress in other areas. They also face unique issues stemming from their presence in an urban centre rather than a smaller community. Kwanlin Dun First Nation plays a vital role in traditional justice systems adapted to modern ways, such as Circle Sentencing and the Kwanlin Dun Tribal Police services. The First Nation is busy with cultural events related to children. Elders are teaching them about ways of the past and how to survive on the land.

Chief Jim Boss, the traditional chief of Ta'an Kwach'an, recognized shortly after the Gold Rush that his people needed protection for their land and culture. He was

prompted to write a letter to Ottawa stating that his people should be given some compensation. The outcome was that a small amount of "land set aside" or a reserve was established for the Ta'an and the case was considered closed. Today the Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation are striving to preserve their culture and language and also pursue activities that assist in this process.

The Economy

Top



Whitehorse is the government centre for the Yukon and government activities provide support and stability to the community. Whitehorse also has a diversified business sector which serves the entire Territory. Tourism is growing in importance to the Whitehorse economy. The community benefits both directly, from visiting tourists, and by providing the transportation and business base for tourism activities elsewhere in the Yukon. The community's large and increasingly stable population, together with the growth of tourism, has encouraged the development of other service industries. Employment in Whitehorse amounts to 71 percent of the Yukon total.

The Whitehorse economy still relies in part on the state of Yukon mining, and many of the businesses that provide services to the mining industry are headquartered in the city. When mining is in the doldrums, as it has been in 1998 and 1999, the Whitehorse economy shows signs of malaise, with increased unemployment and some population loss.

Government is the major source of economic activity in Whitehorse, and the government services sector accounts for 21 percent of total employment. Other significant factors in the economy are education services, with 7 percent of employment, and health and social services, with 9 percent of employment. Apart from health service, which is heavily concentrated in Whitehorse, these proportions are very similar to the rest of the Yukon.

The city's role as business centre for the Yukon is reflected in the strength of business services, which provide 6 percent of all employment in Whitehorse, and finance, insurance and real estate, at 3 percent. In comparison, the rest of the Yukon has about 2 percent of all employment in these sectors. Other key services provided out of Whitehorse for the whole Territory are communications and

utilities. The 5 percent share of employment provided by these sectors reflects this role. Whitehorse has a far lower proportion of people working in mining, forestry, fishing and trapping than the rest of the Yukon, but it has about the same proportion in agriculture. Whitehorse people working in sectors such as mining and forestry are likely to provide services such as testing, rather than work in production.

The accommodation and food services sector accounts for 9 percent of total Whitehorse employment. This is below the proportion found in the rest of the Yukon, where many communities rely heavily on tourism for jobs. However, employment in retail and wholesale trade, at 15 percent of the total, is above the proportion found elsewhere in the Territory. This is because Whitehorse is the supply centre for most Yukon communities, and people tend to buy many products, especially big-ticket items, directly from Whitehorse. Other services, including recreation activities, provide about 7 percent of employment, close to the proportion elsewhere in the Yukon.

Transportation is linked to tourism and travel around the Yukon. It contributes about 5 percent of Whitehorse's total employment, about the same proportion as in the rest of the Yukon. Construction activity is variable, but generally provides about 8 percent of employment in the Whitehorse area.

Work

Top

At the time of the 1996 Census, about 82 percent of Whitehorse people aged 15 years and over reported that they were involved in the labour market. This is slightly above the overall Yukon proportion of 81 percent. Unemployment was lower than elsewhere in the Yukon. At the time of the 1996 Census, unemployment in Whitehorse was estimated to be about 10 percent. Unemployment was higher for men than for women: 11 percent, compared to about 9 percent.

Young people, those aged 15 to 24, are only slightly more likely to be active in the labour market in Whitehorse than in many other parts of the Yukon. About 70 percent of the age group in the Whitehorse

area reported that they were in the labour market in 1996. Unemployment for young people in Whitehorse is about 17 percent, higher than for all other age groups.

On average in 1998, 1,462 individuals in Whitehorse were claiming employment insurance payments (formerly unemployment insurance). This number is 65 percent of all claims in the Yukon, reflecting an employment situation slightly better than the Yukon average.

Whitehorse has far more full-time, full year work than elsewhere in the Yukon. The 1996 Census reported that 48 percent of workers living in Whitehorse said their work was full-time, full year. This compares with a Yukon average of 44 percent. Once the influence of Whitehorse is accounted for, only 34 percent of those living in the rest of the Yukon reported having full-time, full year work.

Self-employment in Whitehorse, at 12 percent of all employment, is not much different from elsewhere in the Yukon.

Average employment income for all workers living in Whitehorse is approximately 9 percent above the Yukon average which was estimated at $30,000 in 1998. For those working full-time, full year, average earnings in Whitehorse are about 4 percent above the equivalent Yukon average which was estimated at about $44,300 in 1998.

People living in Whitehorse find work in many different occupations, reflecting the modern and diversified nature of the Whitehorse economy.

Sales and service occupations employ the largest share of the Whitehorse workforce. At the time of the 1996 Census, about 25 percent of employment in the community was in sales and service occupations, such as cooks, food service jobs, retail sales, cashiers, and cleaners.

Business and administrative occupations are the community's second-largest employment field. About 20 percent of all employment in 1996 derived from this group, which includes occupations such as accountants, bookkeepers, and clerical workers. The high share reflects Whitehorse's position as the government and business centre for the Territory.

Management occupations in Whitehorse provide about 11 percent of total employment. A further 11 percent comes from the government, education, and

social services field, which includes occupations such as teachers, social workers, lawyers, and policy and community service workers. The proportion is high because so much of the Territory's government, business, and education activity occurs in Whitehorse.

Whitehorse is also the Yukon's major health centre, with a hospital and a full range of health practitioners. Health occupations make up about 4 percent of employment. Similarly, science occupations provide proportionately more work in Whitehorse than elsewhere in the Yukon. These occupations include engineers, technicians, surveyors, and computer programmers.

Occupations in the trades, transport, equipment operating, mining, forestry and other primary sectors make up a far smaller share of the Whitehorse employment picture.

Education

Top

The 1996 Census reported that 32 percent of Whitehorse people aged 15 or older had taken some non-university education or training after leaving school. About 30 percent had taken some university-level education. About half of these, or 17 percent of people aged 15 and over, had completed at least a bachelor-level degree. About 31 percent of the 15-plus population said their highest level of education was some secondary school (grades 9 and above). Just 4 percent reported completion of Grade 9 or less.

Close to 60 percent of the 15-to-24 age group reported that they were attending school or taking some education during 1996. This reflects the comparative ease of completing school or taking further education while living in Whitehorse, as well as the fact that the Yukon's post-secondary education is based in the capital city.

Future Prospects and Developments

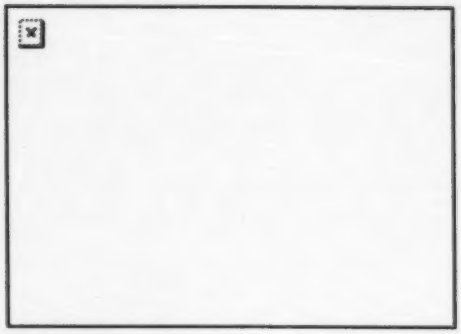
Top

The economy in Whitehorse is sustained to a large extent by government activities, and employment in various government sectors provides long-term jobs and good incomes.

Mining is still a major influence on the economic health of Whitehorse. There are mines at various stages of development in the Yukon, but all are waiting for an upturn in mineral prices. The Yukon is generally considered under-explored for most minerals. However, Yukon mines developed to date have tended to be high

cost and, therefore, vulnerable when mineral prices decline. Mining recovery and growth would boost the Whitehorse economy.

Whitehorse tends to have more stable work and lower unemployment than elsewhere in the Yukon. Nevertheless, there is still a need for economic growth and job growth. The drive for diversification in the Whitehorse economy comes from a young workforce, high unemployment for both young people and First Nations people, and repeated downturns in mining.



Tourism is one area which has shown considerable growth in the Yukon. This growth is reflected not only in the numbers of tourists coming for traditional summer tourism but also in the types of activities available. Many activities emphasize the adventure and wilderness potential of the Yukon. The tourism season is being extended by winter tourism activities, and increasing numbers of tourists are coming from the United States, and Europe and other parts of the world. All of this provides more potential for job growth in Whitehorse as the transportation and service centre for Yukon-wide tourism.

Yukon First Nations have been increasing their economic development activities in the past few years. Dana Naye Ventures is a lending agent for First Nations businesses in tourism and other fields. In addition to the many individual First Nation people who own and operate small businesses, First Nations consortiums have invested in businesses as diverse as major hotels, office buildings, and a window manufacturing company. Members of the Yukon First Nations Tourism Association emphasize tourism as a source of economic and job growth and a number of First Nations tourism businesses operate out of Whitehorse. These include retail, arts and crafts, outfitting and adventure, and air or helicopter services.

Recently the Yukon Government has encouraged the development of a film industry, largely based in Whitehorse. Training and support for northern productions come from several sources. At a wider level, new communications technology allows a relatively remote centre like Whitehorse to develop economic activities that rely on the skills and knowledge of the workforce rather than on physical location.

Community Services

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Education from elementary to post-secondary is available in Whitehorse. There are 10 elementary schools, including one with a French immersion program, and three secondary schools. In addition, Whitehorse has a French-language school that offers both elementary and secondary education. Like all Yukon schools, the core curriculum (80%) follows the British Columbia Ministry of Education curriculum, and students are eligible to write B.C. departmental exams. The community also has a number of daycare centres and family day homes. Three schools operate after-school care programs. The Child Development Centre offers services for pre-school children with special needs.

Ayamdigut Campus, the main campus of Yukon College, is located in Whitehorse. It offers several program options in trades and technology, business administration and computer skills. The College also has university credit programs in arts and sciences, northern studies, and several human services areas, including social services and nursing. Through cooperative arrangements with other institutions, students can pursue full degrees in several fields at Yukon College. In addition, the College delivers academic upgrading programs for those wishing to finish high school or prepare for further study after high school. In 1988 Yukon College moved into a new facility with modern classrooms, laboratories, microcomputer labs, on-campus residences for families and single students, and a child care centre.

A full range of health care services is available in Whitehorse. There is a hospital with about 60 beds and a staff of approximately 70 nurses. The hospital includes maternity care. More than 40 physicians have practices in Whitehorse, and a further 50 are licensed in the Yukon. The latter group, many of them specialists, provides itinerant services in Whitehorse. Dentists' services are readily available. There is a full-time ambulance service. There are also two extended-care facilities with another in the planning stage, seniors' housing, and a senior citizens' centre.

The Yukon Family Services Association and the Yukon Housing Corporation

provide services from their main offices in Whitehorse, and the YTG Health and Social Services department provides a range of services in the Whitehorse area. There is a women's transition house, Kaushee's Place, providing emergency shelter as well as longer-term housing assistance and counseling services.

The Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwach'an First Nations provide a range of social services to their members, including social assistance and elder care.

Yukon Territorial Government and federal government departments have their main offices in Whitehorse and provide a full range of individual and business services.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has a full-service office in Whitehorse.

Policing is provided by the RCMP with a staff at the Yukon headquarters of about 40 officers, including an inspector and First Nation special constables. An aircraft section of the RCMP, based at Whitehorse, has one aircraft. The Kwanlin Dun First Nation operates its own crime prevention force, with constables and an officer from RCMP headquarters. Probation services are provided in Whitehorse. Whitehorse is also the location of the Territory's main correctional centre, a secure facility for young offenders, and a halfway house.

The City of Whitehorse has a fire department with a chief, 20 full-time staff, and approximately 20 volunteer firefighters. The fire department operates from two well-equipped firehalls.

A 9-1-1 service is available in Whitehorse and surrounding areas for emergency police, fire, and ambulance responses.

The Yukon Electrical Co. Ltd. supplies hydroelectric power from the Whitehorse dam at Schwatka Lake.

Canada Post flies mail in daily. Some mail is trucked in three times a week. Local dial-up Internet access is available from a number of Internet service providers. NorthwesTel provides a full range of telephone services in Whitehorse.

Public bus transportation is provided by Whitehorse Transit, including a Handy Bus service.

Full library services are available at the Whitehorse Public Library, including

Full banking services are available in Whitehorse, with all major Canadian banks represented.

Whitehorse is connected by all-weather highways to all Yukon communities except Old Crow. Whitehorse is also connected to southern Canada by the Alaska Highway and the Stewart/Cassiar Highway. There is road access to the Alaskan ports of Skagway and Haines. The Dempster Highway provides access to the Mackenzie Delta area of the Northwest Territories.

Whitehorse International Airport has three paved runways and is maintained year-round. There is daily scheduled jet service between Whitehorse and southern Canadian cities, and extra seasonal services. In 1999, international flights from Germany started up for the summer months. Air service is also available from Whitehorse to most Yukon communities, to Inuvik and Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, and to Juneau and Fairbanks in Alaska. Helicopter charter service is available through several companies based in Whitehorse. Float plane facilities are available at Schwatka Lake. Whitehorse airport is a Canada Customs port of entry.

Regular freight service is provided by truck between Whitehorse and southern population centres, and several local carriers provide freight service within the Territory.

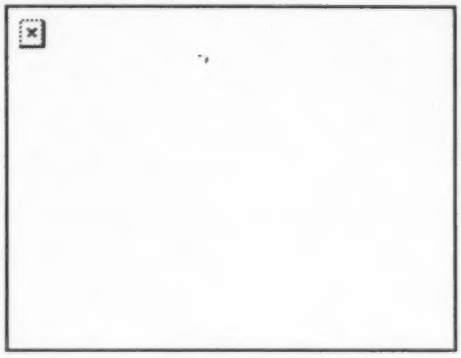
Whitehorse offers a wide variety of recreation facilities, including ice arenas, outdoor skating rinks, a curling rink, a downhill ski facility, a dog mushing track, a bowling alley, a stock car racing track, two cinemas, golf courses, and a ski chalet and cross-country ski trails, some of which are lighted for night skiing. The city also has a racquetball and squash club, several fitness clubs, biathlon/rifle and pistol ranges, and equestrian show grounds. In addition, Whitehorse has a year-round swimming pool, soccer fields, tennis courts, outdoor basketball courts, ball diamonds, and many parks and playgrounds. The Yukon River is popular with canoe and kayak enthusiasts. Hiking and cycling trails link most parts of the city and offer access to surrounding wilderness areas.

The city's cultural facilities include the Yukon Arts Centre, which houses a modern theatre/concert hall and an art gallery. The Guild Hall is a smaller theatre combined with a dance studio. Yukon artists and craftspeople are featured in the Yukon Government Building's art collection, on display in the foyer, and at the Captain

Martin House gallery, as well as in a number of local stores. The Yukon's history and pre-history are displayed in the MacBride Museum, the Yukon Transportation Museum, the Beringia Interpretive Centre, the SS Klondike National Historic Site, and at several other heritage sites.

Whitehorse has an active retail sector, with several major chain stores as well as many locally-owned businesses. The majority of retail activity is centred in the city's downtown, although some businesses are located in other parts of the city. Whitehorse has one major indoor mall and one department store, several smaller indoor and strip malls, and numerous individual stores. Whitehorse retail outlets offer a variety of products, including clothing, electronics, music, footwear, photography supplies, hardware, sports wear and equipment, craft supplies, computers, home appliances, and furniture. Other specialty stores offer bed and bath supplies, chocolates, pet supplies, greeting cards, building and construction supplies, lottery tickets, sewing and quilting supplies, knitting supplies, flowers, gifts, wine and beer making supplies, and automotive parts. There is a Thrift Shop in Whitehorse, and a number of stores sell used items, such as women's, maternity, and children's clothing, music, videos, books, and sports equipment.

Four major grocery stores and many convenience stores are located throughout the city. In addition, there are two health food stores, a few specialty bakeries, and a deli.



Visitors to Whitehorse have seven major hotels and over 15 smaller motels and hotels in which to stay. Most are open year round. More than twelve B & B establishments are located in and just outside the city. Some are operated seasonally and others are open year round.

Whitehorse has more than 50 restaurants serving a wide variety of foods. Several major chain restaurants are represented, in addition to locally-owned restaurants. These restaurants serve everything from fast food to various kinds of international cuisine. Specialty coffee is available, along with a wide array of food items and cooking styles. Most restaurants in Whitehorse are open throughout the year.

More than 15 service stations and fuel companies are located in Whitehorse, offering gasoline, propane and other automobile fuels, home heating fuels, and automotive repairs and servicing.

Services for Business

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In addition to the variety of retail and food services and accommodation, Whitehorse offers a number of additional services to people visiting the city for business purposes. Most business services are available only on weekdays although a few are available on Saturdays and Sundays. Faxes can be sent and received at five different locations during regular business hours on weekdays. Three of these businesses also offer fax services on Saturdays. Five printing companies provide photocopying services during regular weekday business hours.

The Whitehorse Public Library offers photocopying services on Saturdays and Sundays, as well as weekdays and evenings. Two Internet providers offer Internet and email access to the public on an hourly basis, as does the Whitehorse Public Library. Cell phone service is available within Whitehorse and some of the immediate outlying areas of the city. Other business services in Whitehorse include printing companies, accounting firms, secretarial services, office supply stores, advertising and graphic design firms, and computer servicing outlets.

Cost of Living

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The cost of living in Whitehorse is generally higher than in southern Canadian communities. However, it is lower on average than the cost of living elsewhere in the Yukon or in communities in many parts of northern Canada. The accompanying table gives an indication of Whitehorse prices in comparison with prices in Alberta and British Columbia.

In 1996, according to the Census, there were over 5,200 occupied dwellings in the Whitehorse area. The average value of these dwellings ranged from $146,000 in the City of Whitehorse, for a home with two to three bedrooms, to $155,000 in some of the surrounding areas. Rental housing cost $500 to $700 a month on average in 1996. The latest information from *Yukon Region First Nations Profiles* reports that the Kwanlin Dun First Nation administers about 250 houses for use by Kwanlin Dun members.

Living in the Community

Whitehorse is a small city, but feels much larger.

The city has more than its share of big-city amenities: cinemas, stores, restaurants and espresso bars, a full calendar of cultural events and public entertainment, indoor arenas and swimming pool, commuter bus service, and paved streets. Many of these facilities are not available in other Yukon communities. In fact, they might not be available in a southern Canadian city the size of Whitehorse. The difference is Whitehorse's position as capital, and as service centre for all of the Yukon and parts of northwestern British Columbia and Southeast Alaska.

Many people choose to live in Whitehorse for its combination of modern city comfort and small-town neighbourliness, in one of the most beautiful wilderness settings in North America. Neighbours in Whitehorse know each other, and strangers chat in elevators and checkout lines. People tend to be deeply involved in the community, through a myriad of organizations and interest groups. The wilderness is on the city's doorstep, and residents make full use of it. Sports and outdoor activities are very popular. A great deal of business in Whitehorse is conducted at lunch and coffee meetings, partly to avoid conflicts with soccer games, evening skiing, school council meetings, kayaking practice, or any of the countless other activities that people enjoy.

Climate

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Weather reports for 1997 showed the average daily temperature in Whitehorse in January was minus 20.2 degrees Celsius, while in July the daily average was plus 15 C. Daily averages are based on a 24-hour day, so daytime temperatures are generally substantially warmer. The record high in 1997 was 27.5 degrees C, and the record low was minus 47 C. Whitehorse has a relatively dry climate. Annual precipitation in 1997 totaled 242.4 millimetres. This included 150.9 millimetres of rain and 139.2 centimetres of snow.

More Information

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Community and business service information on Whitehorse is available at the City of Whitehorse home page, http://www.city.whitehorse.yk.ca/

The municipal government can be contacted at City of Whitehorse, 2121 Second

Avenue, Whitehorse YT, Y1A 1C2, Phone: (867) 667-6401, Fax: (867) 668-8384.

Further information about Whitehorse is available at http://relocatecanada.com/whitehorse/whitehorse.html and at http://www.yukonalaska.com/communities/whitehorsehist.html

For information about the Yukon College, go to http://yukoncollege.yk.ca/

For information about community health, justice, and social services, go to http://www.yukonweb.com/government/womensdir/directory/

Details about the Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwach'an First Nations can be found in a book, *Yukon Region First Nation Profiles*, published by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in 1998 and available from the department. Some of the information from this publication is available on-line at http://esd.inac.gc.ca/fnprofiles/

For more information about the two First Nations, go to http://www.yfnta.org/

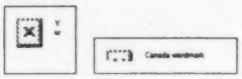
For information on occupations in the Yukon, working conditions, and the Yukon economy, see *Yukon WorkFutures* at http://www.workfutures.yk.ca

For information about the local environment, see the *Yukon State of the Environment Report* at http://www.taiga.net/yukonsoe/

For general information about the Yukon, see Yukon Fact Sheets at http://www.gov.yk.ca/facts.html

The Strategis Business Map has some community information, links to Statistics Canada community information, and has a map system: http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/scdt/bizmap/nav.html

The Yukon Bureau of Statistics has annual economic and statistical reviews at http://www.yukonweb.com/government/ybs/

For current job listings throughout the Yukon, check the Yukon office of Human Resources Development Canada at http://www.yt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/lmi.html

See the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce at http://wcc.yukon.net